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# Courts tell doctors medical kickbacks are bribes too

By Wang Yu

Medical workers who accept money or any other reward from a pharmaceutical company, medical equipment supplier or agent can be charged with commercial bribery, according to a ruling by the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate last Friday.

The commercial interests of medical workers has been a subject of suspicion for years. Some doctors promote pharmaceutical products through their prescriptions in exchange for kickbacks.

Recent exposure of such corruption has severely damaged the trust relationship between doctors and patients.

When the government set about its medical reforms 20 years ago, it made some terrible mistakes. The reforms made doctors and hospital depend on profits and medicine sales to earn a respectable salary.

For most doctors, base pay is very low — especially for new hires, who earn roughly 2,500 yuan per month after factoring in their bonus. That pay is barely enough to support life in a big city.

"As far as I know, more than 90 percent of all doctors receive kickbacks, and it is now accepted as part of our income," said Zheng Hongyun, a young doctor who works in a major hospital.

"How much money you can get depends on your department chief, because he is the one paid off by the pharmaceutical companies and entrusted with distribution. Usually, manufacturers of Chinese medicine offer more as their profit margins are high-est," he said.

"I don't think most doctors like to live on these kickbacks. But they are just doing what they have to keep a balance. It's the system that is broken: not the doctors," he said.

Since 2006, the government has tried to crack down on commercial bribery in the medical system, but the regulations are too vague to

prosecute anyone. This new ruling can be seen as a breakthrough, though it still fails to directly identify kickbacks from patients as bribery.

Hongbao, the red envelopes filled with money traditionally given at Spring Festival and weddings, has become a synonym for bribery. It's an unspoken rule that patients or their families must pay off their doctors before any major surgery.

"Patients paying off doctors is increasingly rare. That kind of blatant bribery drew the ire of both government and society. Patients have learned doctors will value their lives, even without the extra money," Zheng said.

## Over half of local sex workers shun condoms

By Han Manman

More than half of the city's sex workers do not ask their clients to use condoms in spite of this year's surge in HIV/AIDS cases, according to a report by the city's health department released Tuesday.

"Only 46.5 percent of Beijing's 90,000 prostitutes used condoms during each sexual encounter last month," Fang Laiying, director of the Bureau of Public Health, said.

Sex has replaced intravenous drug use as the main source of new HIV infections this year, Fang said.

As of the end of last month, the city has found 5,635 people infected with HIV, 755 of whom are newly infected. Among the patients, 21 percent are locals, 75.1 percent are non-Beijing residents and 3.9 percent are foreigners.

The disease has spread most quickly through groups not traditionally considered high risk due to the "increased transmission through sexual contact," Fang said.

From 2004 to 2007, the percentage of infections developed through sexual contact rose from 25 percent to 42 percent: this year, as many as 55 percent of HIV positive patients contracted the virus through sex, Fang said.

"The HIV/AIDS transmission rate among homosexuals has also risen," Fang said. One study found the rate of infection among homosexuals rose from 0.5 percent in 2004 to 5.5 percent this year.

"Smokers keep smoking even though they know it may give them cancer. Although many people know [unprotected sex] carried a risk of HIV infection, they are unwilling to lose any pleasure by wearing a condom," said Wu Zunyou, director of National Center for AIDS/STD Control and Prevention.

Wu said the number of HIV infections only reflects those with the virus who have sought medical treatment. Many more infections may remain unknown. Some carriers are not willing to go to the hospital; some do not know they are infected, he said.

All hotels, resorts and guest houses in the capital will provide condoms in their rooms by the end of this year, Fang said. Clubs, saunas and construction sites will also be supplied with condom vending machines.

Condoms are proven to be effective at preventing the spread of the virus through sex with an unfamiliar partner. That is why the bureau has decided to promote distribution of condoms at all public venues, Fang said.

The country reported about 700,000 people to be living with HIV as of the end of 2007. An estimated 85,000 had developed AIDS, according to an UNAIDS report issued in September.

Related story on Beijing's foreign HIV patients, see page 11.

## Wuhan seeks former fame as horse race city



A commercial horse race starting this Saturday in Wuhan may be the prelude to a horse racing lottery on the mainland. The authorities did not confirm the rumor.

CFP Photo

By Jin Zhu

A commercial horse race tomorrow will be part of the Sixth China Wuhan International Horse Race Festival, which opened on Wednesday.

The race is part of an experiment to commercialize horse racing on the Chinese mainland, a Wuhan Bureau of Sports spokesperson said.

Organizers said the meet will have four races offering 120,000 yuan in prize money tomorrow, the first day of

the meet.

Starting with this meet, there will be two meets every week with five to seven races.

"The commercialized experiment will ... allow individuals and organizations to join a race club and buy shares in the horses. All prizes come from the sale of naming rights to the meets and houses," Wang Shenshun, deputy director of the bureau, said at a press conference Monday.

However, Wuhan authorities

refused to say if the meet is a prelude to the opening of a horse racing lottery on the mainland.

"The commercial measures are aimed only at creating a top-level horse race meet in China. Rumors of the meet being a lottery are utterly baseless," a spokesperson for Wuhan Oriental Lucky City, the organizer of the festival, said.

Many cities, including Beijing, Guangzhou, Shanghai and Chengdu, are trying to

get licensed to operate a horse racing lottery.

Wuhan Oriental Lucky City has 30,000 outdoor and 4,500 indoor seats, and can accommodate 2,000 race horses.

Prior to 1949, the city was home to a thriving horse race lottery that had its roots in the British establishment of a Chinese horse racetrack in the 19th century.

The municipal government has approved a horse race festival every year since 2003.



# Network site brings new meaning to 'blind' date

By Venus Lee

Yangwuqueqiao, a social networking Web site for single public servants and office workers, held a matchmaking event at Jianwai SOHO last Friday.

Its 50 participants were asked to wear blinders during the first matchmaking party two weeks ago.

Participants were allowed to communicate only through voice, smell, and physical contact. They were allowed to touch hands and feed each other fruit, but the rest was up to intuition.

After selecting a partner, the two were not allowed to meet or send pictures for the next week, though they could communicate by phone, instant messages or text messages to "enhance their affections and get to know each other better."

"The men whose hair smelled clean were the most popular," Rui Jia, a female participant, said.

She said that she remembered the number of her favorite after they talked and played games, and the two swapped tokens at the end.

Last Friday's event drew 16 people, 12 of whom found a match in the end. Then the masks came off.

Gu Yijian thought highly of his people skills and expected to find a spirited young woman. "I was confident about my choice, because I could pick out key details through how she spoke or how her hands felt. But what matters most is that our personalities match," he said.

However, Rui refused more dates with her "blind" favorite once she found out what the man made. However, she said the activity was interesting. "A man's financial situation is important to me. It gave me a chance to meet someone well-mannered and knowledgeable who would have been glossed over for his looks in any other matchmaking event," she said.



Participants look for a suitable date without seeing each other's face.  
Photo by Lou Lianhao

Lou Lianhao, the psychiatrist who planned the event, said it turned out as he expected.

Lou said he studies matchmaking and tries to invent new events to bring out what may be key elements in a harmonious marriage. "People focus too much on the outside at most events, but that is not

what will make a happy marriage in the future," he said.

No matter how long the relationships last, he plans to hold more blind matchmaking events. "I'll refine the activity based on what we saw in the trial, and I think next time the success rate will be higher," Lou said.

## Model UN conference held in Xi'an



Four hundred students from 10 countries joined in the National Model United Nations (NMUN) conference in Xi'an, Shaanxi

Province this week.

For each conference, students are assigned a country for which they address particular needs

such as environmental protection, medical issues, drug trafficking or terrorism to a panel of all delegates. NMUN exposes

students to international negotiations, cross-cultural communication and the intricacies of diplomatic conduct. CFP Photo

## Man says horse still preferable to hoofing it

By Jackie Zhang

When 28-year-old Chen Hui of Wenzhou heads out for a meeting, he does it on a saddle.

Eight years ago, when Chen's

printing business in Zhejiang Province began to prosper, he began to raise his own horses.

He has had eight steeds, but today keeps two: a white horse

named Dabai and a brown one named Big S, marked by the "S" on its body. He rides his horses once or twice a week to the local equestrian club for classes.

He said his love of horses dates back to his childhood in 1970s, when his father supported the family by transporting goods by carriage.

But Chen said the horses are not for emergencies.

"It is very troublesome to ride a horse," he said. "I have to gear up with all the necessary protective equipment, like my helmet and boots, and take a groomer with me to care for my horse when I dismount."

Chen said he has to send horse feed to his destination in advance on longer trips. "The horse has to have something to eat when it's

all over," he said.

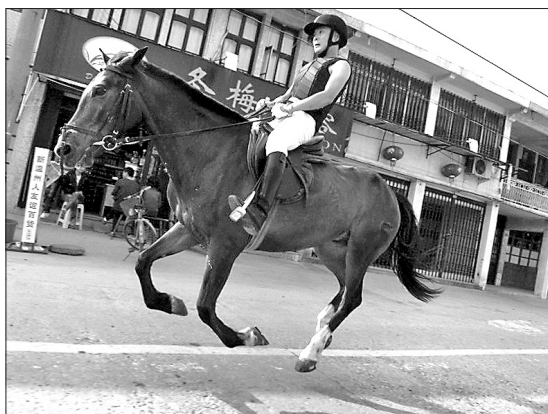
But those troubles are hardly enough to steer Chen from his love of equines.

Legal troubles, on the other hand, may.

According to road safety regulations issued in 2004, horses are not listed among the many urban transportation devices. The closest the code comes is a footnote about allowing trained cattle to drive a cab.

"When I first rode on street in 2001, a traffic officer stopped me and told me to turn back," Chen said. He said it was the only time he was prevented from riding on the road.

"Usually the police don't stop me since I obey the traffic regulations and don't cause any accidents," he said.



Chen Hui saddles up for each business trip.

Photo by Chen Hui

## Man killed for teacher's love gets sympathy

By Annie Wei

Three weeks ago, a 19-year-old Guizhou man was sentenced to death by a local superior court for stabbing and killing his classmate.

Today, family, lawyers and netizen supporters pin their hopes on a death penalty review to save his life.

Local media and Internet detectives were exposed a tragic love triangle between Meng Chao, the murdered He Xiaoli and their 45-year-old woman teacher Wang Yongli.

Meng, a former student at No 6 Guiyang Middle School, Guizhou Province, intended to rid his teacher of He, a pestering classmate, also another lover of the teacher.

On September 27, 2007 - Meng's 18th birthday - Wang told him that He had been bothering her. When Meng saw the two on the street at noon, Wang waved him off and asked him not to get involved.

She later phoned Meng to complain about the other classmate and gave him He's address.

Meng said he went to visit He Xiaoli to talk, but what the other man had to say infuriated him. Meng stabbed He in the back, chest and abdomen with a 30-centimeter blade.

"I wanted to turn myself in, but Wang said she could not bear to lose me, and that the police would never solve the case," Meng said.

Police arrived at the school the next day to arrest Meng in his final morning class.

Guiyang Intermediate People's Court found him guilty of murder and sentenced him to death in April. Although the Guizhou Superior People's Court affirmed the ruling, Meng's lawyers insist the previous trials were faulty.

Zhang Yuanzhong, Meng's lawyer from Beijing Wentian Law Firm, said 103 phone records of calls Wang made to Meng have gone missing.

Netizens agreed something was not right, and an online survey conducted by Sohu found 32,400 respondents opposed the court ruling. The 2,300 who supported the ruling pointed to how Meng turned 18 only hours before the killing, and his refusal to turn himself in.

Wang has not faced charges, and her only appearance has been as a prosecution witness. Zhang said it would be difficult to charge her with interference based on Meng's confession alone.

Dong Lihua, director of the Beijing Juvenile Legal Aid and Research Center, said she opposed the ruling.

Meng killed his classmate within 24 hours of his 18th birthday, she said, and insisted that Wang should share some responsibility for emotionally appealing to the murderer to rid herself of He.

Dong hopes the attention this case has received will prompt the government to review its laws on sexual assault, especially on teenage males.



By Han Manman

Three months ago, Zhang Xiaoyun was one of thousands of Beijing orphans who had no hope for a future. No one cared for the blank-faced girl, whose parents died four years ago.

And then her chance came.

Zhang was selected as one of the first students to attend Beijing Fangshan Angel Training School, the country's first elite, family-care orphan school backed by US-based Living Hope International (LHI).

Where other orphanages merely support a child to adulthood, Angel School gives its orphans a real family and trains them to become future leaders.

#### A new family

Twelve-year-old Xiaoyun is a sensitive girl.

When reporters arrived at her school, she cried because a boy said her feet smelled bad earlier that day.

She was born to a poor family in Fangshan District. Her parents died when she was eight years old, and her aunt and uncle – her only relatives – abused her. Her aunt stole the subsidy the local government provided for Xiaoyun each month.

Three months ago, Xiaoyun was sent to Angel School, where she, together with three other girls, formed a family. The girls live in a two-bedroom family unit with their "house parents": 26-year-old Sun Qirong and her boyfriend Song Zhihe. The couple plans to tie the knot next year.

"In the beginning, Xiaoyun has some very bad habits: she constantly said dirty words and was sloppy, impassive and frequently quarreled with the others," Song said.

"She has changed a lot. She's still sensitive, but now she has started to have dreams. She is more active and is learning to care about others," he said. "She can even speak a little English with our expat volunteers."

#### Care begins at home

"What sets Angel School apart from other orphan assistance programs throughout China is our strong emphasis on providing 'family care,'" Zhang Mei, LHI's China representative, said. The non-profit organization was founded in 2004.

"In America, family care training programs for orphans have been quite successful. With a family's care and nurturing, orphans grow up to be useful members of society," she said. "Raising an orphan in a family setting is not only socially desirable, but medically therapeutic."

Zhang said seven of the children have developed a strong concept of "family."

"House parents are volunteer couples who have a heart for orphans, as well as knowledge, special skills and high ethical standards," she said.

"We hope more retired couples will act as volunteer parents. We provide room and board, but the pay is very low," she said.

"Because their children have



Even after marriage, Sun Qirong (left) and Song Zhihe (third from the left) will not leave their orphans.

# Orphan school is a family affair



Xiaoyun (right) is still too sensitive.

46-year-old to tears.

From waking the children up in the morning to checking their homework in the evening, house parents are always by their side.

"Maybe we will be poor. Maybe we won't get to buy our own house or car because of our work here. But we enjoy being their parents," Song said, adding, "This is a labor of love, and I'm so proud to be part of it."

"Even when we get married, we will not leave these children. We want to be with them until they grow up," he said.

#### American couple

The house parents are not the only volunteers in the orphanage. Three months ago, the school welcomed its first expat volunteer family: David and Jan Dunn and their daughter Abby.

rarely a lucrative occupation, this time the couple does not even collect a paycheck.

"We have many friends back home, and they are excited about helping the orphans and believe in what we are doing. Even though we earn nothing, we receive some support from them," David Dunn said.

He said some of their friends are considering coming to join them.

When talking about the school, Jan Dunn said she is always moved by what the children's do. "On one outing, one of the children saw a little dog and he said, 'This dog is an orphan. Can we add him to our family?'" she said.

Jan said the children did not want to see anyone, even a dog, suffer the same way they had. The dog has since become one of

love them. I can feel them starting to realize they are loved," Jan said.

#### Future leaders

The school is unique in its effort to identify and develop the children's talents from early childhood, Zhang said.

She said that besides providing the nine years of compulsory education, the school focuses on culture training, including dance, music and handicrafts. "We hope they can learn more skills with which they can earn a living."

The school uses a "relationship network" to invite successful businessmen, politicians, scientists and athletes from China and abroad to instruct and motivate the children, and to give them something for which to work.

"We will support the orphans until they graduate from university," Zhang said. Those that cannot make it into college will receive other training, she said.

The children all have dreams. Some want to become doctors, some want to become designers and Xiaoyun said she wants to be a philanthropist. Angel School will provide them with related training courses based on their dreams, Zhang said.

As for the question of where the next 100 orphans will be selected from, Zhang said the school will give top priority to local orphans.

#### A bright future

The 100 orphans in Angel School are lucky, but they are only a fraction of China's orphaned youth.

No matter whether its "elite family care" pattern can work, LHI's ideas may inspire other Chinese orphanages to remember that their own orphans need a future.

Shang Xiaoyuan, a professor at Beijing Normal University who is involved in orphanage research, said the government is paying more attention to the conditions in which orphans grow up.

It is trying to find a way to provide the life and work skills orphans need to build a bright future, Shang said.

The last national survey conducted by the Ministry of Civil Affairs in 2005 showed that the country is home to 573,000 orphans, 66,000 of whom have been adopted by government-sponsored orphanages.



The Duns play with the orphans after class.



An orphan dog becomes one of the children's playmates.

Photos by Zuma Cui

In 1996, the Duns came to China as teachers. That was when they met, fell in love and married. When they heard about the school, they decided to volunteer as English teachers.

While teaching English is

their playmates.

As the children's teachers and friends, the Duns always tell them how much they love them.

"We want the children to know that when they are good, we love them, and when they are bad, we still



# Guns N' Roses democracy album is 'venomous'



Guns N' Roses' controversial new album *Chinese Democracy* irked Chinese netizens.

Xinhua Photo

(Reuters) – China has given scant attention to rockers Guns N' Roses' controversial new album *Chinese Democracy*, saying the music was bad and that they were not that popular anyway.

The band's first album in 17 years was released last Sunday, and its Geffen Records label has already said it thinks it unlikely to be approved for release in China.

"As far as I know, many people don't like this kind of music," Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang told a news briefing Tuesday. "It's too noisy and clamorous."

Formed in California in 1985, the band has sold over 100 million albums worldwide and has won many international music awards. Their 1987 hit single "Sweet Child o' Mine" is frequently voted one of the greatest rock tracks of all time.

But their new album has drawn a furious response from some Chinese Internet users, who accused the band of trying to stir up ill will. Others were more understanding.

"Forgive them, they haven't been on top of the world charts for hundreds of years. It's tough to avoid becoming outdated," said one post on popular Web portal Mop.com.

The album is currently 34th in the Billboard Hot 100.

The album artwork includes Beijing artist Shi Lifeng's 2008 oil painting "Red Star." Photos of the military and the Hong Kong skyline also appear.

But the album is devoid of bad language or sexual references. That was not the case with the band's last release, which did slip through the net.

## Why the conflict over Democracy?

A heated debate always ensues when Westerners and the Chinese discuss democracy. Westerners do not really understand China, and they have no intention of doing so.

Westerners have two mistaken notions about China. One is that they believe the government is totalitarian, which logically makes it unpopular among the people.

The second Western assumption is that the views of political exiles and anti-government activists represent those of the populace.

Why these misunderstandings?

The West ignores that the government has brought astonishing economic growth to the country in the last 30 years and benefited many people. If Westerners were willing to investigate, they will find that the

government has a higher approval rating from its people than some of their own governments have from their citizenry.

Secondly, they do not realize that the truly representative and influential voices in society belong to the middle-class and intelligentsia that came into being during the last 30 years.

Those who have benefited from the economic reforms want the country to go even further, but they basically support it. While a majority of Westerners listen to political exiles, how much do they know about this rising social force?

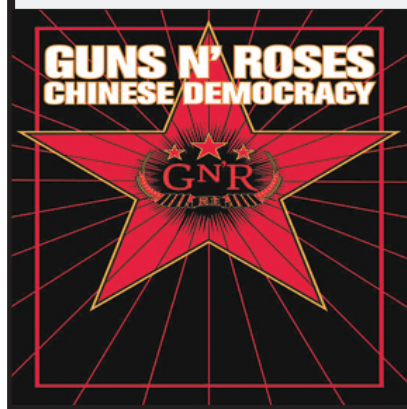
At a deeper level, they do not understand the historical and cultural factors that formed the present social and political system.

Eastern culture values collectivism more than personal liberty, contrary to Western culture. Chinese children are brought up to sacrifice their individual comforts for the sake of the group.

Without doubt, democracy and the rule of law are the ultimate goals of modernization. At present, however, it is more important to maintain a strong and powerful central government than to give the population more personal liberty, even though this leads to corruption and lack of some economic freedoms.

But this is the road to modernization for which a price has to be paid.

(Excerpts from a Chinese-language essay written by an anonymous overseas Chinese who named himself Mr Li.)



## Gov looks back to fix kids' eyesight

(Reuters) – The government has resorted to the age-old practices of traditional medicine to help millions of schoolchildren nationwide cope with a very modern problem: poor eyesight.

Eye strengthening exercises have been common in Chinese schools for decades, but according to recent tests, just one in 10 Beijing schoolchildren has good eyesight, down from almost one in three in 2005.

Education officials, concerned about the deterioration, recently introduced a new series of exercises that focus on pressure points around the head, including the back of the neck and the ears.

"It is a combination of sport and medical practices," said a medic at a Beijing primary school.

Eye problems in children have been blamed on too much studying in an over-competitive school system.

Statistics have shown that the eyesight of students noticeably degenerates as they progress through school, where they have to squint at characters and scientific formulae, often in dimly-lit libraries.

Around a third of primary school children had poor eyesight while over 80 percent of university students were afflicted, Xinhua new agency said, citing experts as saying that excessive strain on eyes, not genetic inheritance, accounted for 45 percent of the problem nationwide.

The army recently lowered its eyesight requirements as part of a drive to

recruit more college graduates, who are known for their bad eyes, Xinhua said.

Twice a day, students take a break from their studies to perform the eye exercises. Many pupils, and teachers, support the initiative.

"It's great. My eyesight was weaker before but now it's better," said 10-year-old Wen Lishen.

But not everyone is convinced.

Li Xipu, founder of Beijing's Sekwa Eye Hospital, said children suffering from myopia, or nearsightedness, should receive mainstream medical treatment, and not rely on traditional therapy alone.

"Students have to spend less time in the classroom – reading – and spend more time outdoors," he said.

## Eight Africans sentenced to death for drugs

(Reuters) – A court in southern China has sentenced eight African drug smugglers to death, with a two-year reprieve, Xinhua reported Wednesday.

Another was given a life sentence at a mass court hearing in the southern city of Guangzhou, Xinhua reported.

The convicted smugglers are from Uganda, Benin and Zimbabwe, it said. A two-year reprieve means their sentence can be commuted into a life sentence after two years of good behavior.

Six of the smugglers had drugs found hidden inside their bodies, according to the report. The government has admitted it is facing an uphill struggle dealing with a flood of drugs coming across its borders, mainly from Southeast and central Asia.

## Police expanded at Mount Everest base

(AP) – Border police have significantly beefed up their presence at the base of Mount Everest amid rising visitor numbers and increasing cases of theft, prostitution and gambling, Xinhua reported Tuesday.

The influx of people to the area has brought increased crime to the north face of Everest, and authorities last year pledged to boost police presence following reports of thefts of food, oxygen tanks and climbing gear.

Visitors to Everest also complain about unethical guides, tricksters selling defective oxygen bottles, prostitution and gambling on the Tibetan side.

A former police post housed in a trailer has been upgraded to a full station, complete with a modern facility situated at 5,200 meters above sea level, according to the report on the *Tibet Daily's* Web site.

It said the station was manned by more than 20 border police, but did not say how big an increase that was from the previous number.

## Shaolin Temple kicks off expansion plan

(Reuters) – The birthplace of kung fu, the Shaolin Temple, has taken over the management of four Buddhist temples in southwest China in a move criticized by some Internet users as mixing religion with capitalism.

The fabled monastery, based in central Henan Province and immortalized in countless martial arts films, has installed 10 monks at temples in Gudu, a tourist district near Yunnan Province's capital Kunming, local media reported Wednesday.

"The move will help build a bridge between the cultures of Henan and Yunnan and increase the influence of Shaolin," Master Yanlu, a Shaolin spokesman, said.

Shaolin will post its monks at the temples for 20 years and will help with charity, maintenance and heritage preservation work, Yanlu said.

The temple's energetic head abbot, Shi Yongxin, said Shaolin's "advanced management system" should be rolled out to more temples across China to help promote Zen Buddhism.

Some Internet users decried the move as a crass attempt to franchise Shaolin.

"The Shaolin takeover is just a way of using its fame to cheat more kind people out of their money," one poster on Web portal Sohu.com said.

The Shaolin Temple has become a high-profile commercial entity in recent years, profiting handsomely from millions of tourists, as well as international stage shows and film productions.

It opened an online merchandising store on a popular Chinese e-commerce site earlier this year, offering goods including shoes, tea and kung fu manuals carrying a 9,999 yuan price tag.



# Fuel tax unchanged, but pricing reform pending

By Huang Daohen

The Ministry of Finance announced this week that it will maintain its tax rates on refined fuel consumption for the next year, quashing expectations that it would explore fuel tax as a path to oil price reform.

The ministry published its decision online, saying that the consumption tax, effective January 1, 2009, will remain at 0.28 yuan per liter for leaded gasoline, 0.20 yuan per liter for unleaded gasoline, naphtha, solvents and lubricants and 0.10 yuan per liter for diesel, jet kerosene and fuel oil.

But the decision, passed by the State Council earlier this month, preceded closed-door talks over the week that officials favored a tax hike over issuance of a new fuel tax.

The cabinet said on Wednesday it plans to publish details of proposed fuel pricing and tax reforms to solicit public opinion.

Wen Yijun, a petrochemical industry analyst at Orient Securities, said the refined fuel consumption tax is separate from the recent proposed fuel tax. "They are not the same concept," Wen said, "The refined fuel consumption tax is levied every year, and since it remains unchanged, there is more room for adjusting fuel tax and oil price reforms."

It is too early to rule out the possibility of future adjustments to the fuel consumption tax, Wen said.

The timing of when to introduce the fuel tax has long been a hot topic. Last week, the government said it would likely levy the tax soon, and it was considering reforms that would lower the price at the pump and slash road tolls.

"The government has repeatedly said that it is looking for an appropriate time to start levying a fuel tax, and now, with the global oil prices falling so rapidly, I think this is a great time," Han Wenke, director-general of

the Energy Research Institute of the National Development and Reform Commission, said at a recent press conference.

Han said that the present low in the price of crude presents a perfect opportunity for the government to levy a tax that would eventually allow the market to set prices.

Currently, the consumption tax, levied on seven refined oil products rather than retail staples of gasoline and diesel, is paid by refiners and importers, who pass on the cost to their customers.

The current pricing system does not fully reflect fluctuations in the world market, Han said. When global oil prices were at their peak, the government was forced to dole out huge subsidies to oil refiners to keep prices at a fixed level.

A proper adjusted fuel tax will contribute to a reasonable pricing mechanism, Wen, the analyst, said. "It is only fair that the more you use a car, the more you should pay for fuel."



Xavier Gemaey

Photo provided by Avis

## Avis partners with Air China for mainland move

By Annie Wei

Avis, an international car rental company and the first joint-venture of its kind in China, has teamed up with Air China, a leading Chinese airline, to deliver its service to more potential customers.

Xavier Gemaey, CEO of Avis, talked about the company's localization plans and strategy for the Chinese market with *Beijing Today*. **Specializing in Chinese auto rental**

For Western car rental companies, China is a special case.

The country does not recognize international drivers' licenses, which means AVIS clients must have a Chinese license to rent and drive their own car. Moreover, the car rental industry in Western countries is built on a mature credit card system. China's credit system and personal credit have a way to go, so AVIS has to use a membership system in China to confirm client credit.

Another issue is cultural differences. Over 95 percent of consumers in the European market are willing to drive a rented car, but China's market is more similar to India's. In China, 70-80 percent of AVIS clients are corporations, whereas in Europe the ratio of private to corporate customers is 50:50.

"Still, we are confident about the market's potential. We have 38,000 cars in France and 20,000 in South Korea. Both countries have much smaller populations than China," Gemaey said.

He also said tourists make up 15-20 percent of AVIS's Chinese business, while business customers make up 20 percent with the rest shared by corporate clients, especially among the Fortune 500.

### Business under credit crisis

Gemaey said the international credit crisis means new opportunities, and he has an optimistic outlook for 2009.

He said AVIS chose to team up with Air China because the airline transfers the most passengers both into and out of the country. He said the partnership will give AVIS access to 1 million potential customers.

AVIS plans to have 70 outlets within three years, while it currently provides mature car service from airports in Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou.

AVIS will use the World Expo 2010 in Shanghai to boost branding and revenue. "The Olympics is a great example," he said. The company's business boomed after the Olympic Games this summer, driven by the influx of Olympic officials, tourists and athletes.

"While the Olympics was only two weeks, the World Expo goes on for six months. It is expected to draw 7 million visitors from all over the world," Gemaey said. As a World Expo sponsor, AVIS will have use of the event's logo.

### Competitors

Gemaey said AVIS does not have a significant rival on the national market. The company has 3,000 cars, 1,600 employees and 24 stores in 17 cities. Its global competitor Hertz pulled out of the country in 2006.

However, AVIS is not without regional competitors, because there are many state-owned car rental services, Gemaey said.

# Billionaire tycoon disappears amid investigation

By Huang Daohen

Legendary billionaire and electronics tycoon Huang Guangyu, worth some 43 billion yuan, has vanished amid reports that he is being detained for alleged market manipulation.

Beijing police confirmed Tuesday that the chairman of Gome, an electric appliance retailer, was under investigation but declined to give details, the *Beijing News* reported.

As of press time, there has been no official word about Huang's supposed detention from either the authorities or the companies he controls.

Huang, 39, who turned his single street stall selling radios and watches into the country's largest appliance chain, was allegedly taken from his home last Wednesday and has been missing ever since, a Gome spokesperson said.

Reports on the reason for Huang's alleged detention vary. Most reports suspect Huang has been involved in the manipulation the share value of Jintai, whose controlling shareholder is his brother Huang Junqing.

The company rose to its daily limit 30 days from February to August last year, a growth that roused the attention of the China Securities Regulatory Commission (CRSC), which is charged with detecting market fraud.

More complicated theories accuse Huang of paying bribes to officials in the Ministry of Commerce and taking out large, irregular loans from a state bank.

However, Yang Jiexing, another private businessman from Zhejiang Province, said Huang's wealth and how he gained it are what may have him in the hot seat.

Yang said many private entrepreneurs had wild disregard for the law during the founding days of their empires.

"There were countless loopholes in the country's regulations on market and business operations when China began to open up in the 1980s," Yang said. "The only thing people cared about at that time was how to get more money and progress."

Yang said he worried about the current investigation, as the fate of China's richest man is directly linked to the 300,000 people Gome employs and the millions of small investors who have a stake in the company's future.

If the government comes down on Huang, what to do with the thousands of Gome staff could prove a major headache, Yang said.



Huang Guangyu, the country's former richest man, now is the subject of a police investigation.  
Xinhua Photo



# Cousins in love get sterilized for marriage

By Zhang Dongya

A marriage license application made by first cousins was rejected by a local civil affairs department even after the woman was sterilized to avoid having children. The cousins appealed their case in court, but their suit was rejected. The law prevents relatives from marrying. Still, some people sympathize with the sweethearts.

The couple, who are known by the pseudonyms Zhang Gang and Wang Hua, come from rural Henan Province. Zhang's mother and Wang's father are siblings. The two grew up together and fell in love with each other later. Last year, their parents agreed to their marriage. In a poor place like their hometown, relatives marrying each other is seen as a way to maintain the family's size and emotional well-being.

Zhang and Wang's application for a marriage license was rejected by their local marriage registration office after it found out they were cousins. When the two learned that the law bans relatives from getting married in order to guarantee their descendants' health, Wang decided to undergo a sterilization procedure.

After the operation, she asked the hospital for a certificate and presented this to the marriage registration office in January. But their request was again turned down.

In their view, they have already addressed the law's concern by deciding to forgo children. They thought the marriage registration office was just picking on them, so they sued it in a local court in May.

According to present marriage regulations, no marriage can be

contracted if the man and woman are lineal blood relatives, or collateral relatives by blood up to the third degree of kinship. The couple are "collateral relatives by blood up to the third degree of kinship," so the court rejected their case.

The two have refused to talk to the media. "They are disappointed at the result, but they have given up on legal avenues because they cannot see how this will help them," said Deng Hongyang, a reporter with the Beijing-based *Legal Daily* who broke the story.

Regulations forbidding marriage between relatives meet the demands of the natural law and also of moral and ethical criteria, which should be followed, Liu Wenqi, a lawyer at the Henan Changfeng Law Office said in an interview with the local *Dahe Daily*.

## Comment

### Cannot be traded with sterilization

Regulations banning marriage between relatives cannot be traded with deciding not to have children. Therefore, they cannot be allowed to marry even if they promise not to have kids. For one thing, the exception will encourage more cases. For another, couples eager to get married will get it at the cost of sterilization, which is cruel and should not be encouraged. But what if they change their minds

about having kids in the future? They will be miserable.

— Liu Weimin, director of Shenzhen Faquan Consultant Office for Marriage

### Related to local customs

Beneath the surface of this case are more complicated reasons related to local traditions and customs. In some rural areas of Henan Province, for example, relatives who marry can save on dowry. There, relatives who decide to marry are greeted with good cheer. Also, it is because

they lack knowledge that they decided to undergo sterilization.

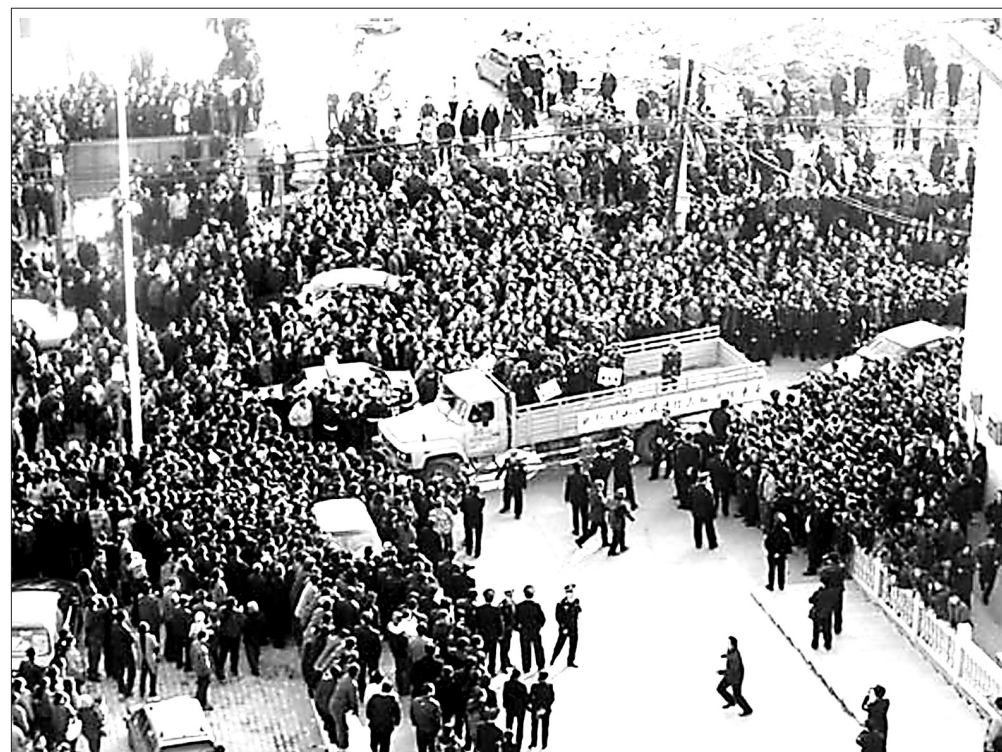
— Deng Hongyang, *Legal Daily* reporter

### More scientific data needed

Some countries do not ban marriages between cousins. Whether this kind of union can lead to more diseases and abnormal babies needs further study. I think they should just stay together even without marriage if their family permits it.

— Ivy Chen, clerk of Bole Associates, Beijing

## Parading of crime suspects irks netizens



Three suspected murderers in a big robbery case on May 29 were paraded through the streets of their hometown before 50,000 onlookers. The spectacle, under police escort, occurred Tuesday in Fugu county, Shanxi Province.

Many netizens opposed the practice. "Parading someone through the streets should not happen in modern society," a netizen from Guangdong Province said.

"Crimes should be judged by law, not by such extreme actions," another netizen from Shanghai said.

Ma Yongguang, a lawyer from Beijing's Hai Wei lawyer's office, said the three have not yet been convicted of the crime, and that the Criminal Justice Police are not allowed to parade suspects through the streets.

(By Jin Zhu)

## New regulations go after lip-synching singers

By Zheng Lu

With the year's end drawing nearer, a busy season for performers, the Ministry of Culture has come out with a draft ordinance that has raised many eyebrows.

According to the new order, which is now in the process of collecting feedback, commercial performers cannot deceive their audience by lip-synching or playing an instrument when it has actually been pre-recorded. The names of violating individuals and companies will be made public, while repeat offenders within a two-year period will face the cancellation of their business licenses.

"Even if a singer catches a cold, he or she should inform the viewers so they can prepare for a less-than-perfect performance, or the singer should just cancel. The singer should never mime," said Li Jianwei, director of the Ministry of Culture's Department of Cultural Market Administration.

The order is expected to deal a big blow to the local showbiz industry, as lip-synching has become common. Audiences who once fumed at the practice have come to accept it.

Before the public became indifferent to lip-synching, singer Cui Jian initiated a campaign in 2002 called "Singing Movement," which asked for a boycott of lip-synchers. Cui, regarded as the Godfather of Chinese Rock, welcomed the Ministry of

Culture's move, his spokesperson You You said. "Cui is gratified with the regulation. He thinks it will strengthen the Chinese music industry to enable it to catch up with the international scene," You said. Cui believes the elimination of pretenders will bring to the fore the true power of music, and show the public that some pop stars are merely pretty faces, You said.

The ordinance's emphasis on "commercial" performers, however, limits its power. The Spring Festival Gala Evening, the highest-rated TV program each year, has a bad history of lip-synching, but it is beyond the Ministry of Culture's reach. "It does not sell tickets, so the regulation does not apply," Li, from the ministry, said.

Speaking of the notorious lip-synching performance at this year's Olympics opening ceremony, Li said the program is not under the order's jurisdiction as it is part of the Games.

Meanwhile, some singers understand the practical need for lip-synching. "I enjoy singing on stage if the equipment is good," Guan Yunpeng, head of the Lucky Monkey Band, said. But he can sympathize with those singers who resort to miming. "Because some sound equipment is terrible, singers have to lip-synch to save themselves and the audience from too much disappointment."

## Comment

### It goes with the territory

The policy's pretty reasonable. If they're singers, then they should be able to sing, right?

— Bik San Chan, student

### Government should keep out

I disagree with it. Though I feel performers should not lip-synch, it's up to the fans to regulate it, not the government.

— Kenneth Bright, accountant

Another problem of implementation? It is reasonable while unrealistic. For the time being, many of us might ignore it because many regu-

lations have been announced but never carried out. I guess it might just be another order on paper.

— Wang Xiaoning, HR

### Good news at last

It is definitely a great regulation. It is high time that the regulation came out and should have been carried out much earlier.

— Cheng Jiulong, media specialist

### Punishment too severe

I partly agree that the performer should not lip synch if people are paying for the performance, but I believe the punishment is too strong.

— Brian O'Meara, student



# Her green eyes on Beijing

By Zhao Hongyi

"Beijing is like your boyfriend. Though he may have some bad habits like smoking, you cannot give him up," Elyse Ribbons, a US citizen, said of her love for the city before last week's staging of her *Green Eyes on Chinese*.

The performance, which Ribbons developed and directed, tells of the joys and miseries in learning the Chinese language and culture. "Because my eyes are light green, I gave the performance this name, which is based on my own experiences,"

she said. She weaved together music, modern dance, comedy and multimedia displays, providing audiences an hour of lighthearted entertainment.

Ribbons directed her first play as a high school student in North Carolina. She started studying the Chinese language at the University of North Carolina, then made her first visit to Beijing in 2001. She decided to live in the capital in 2003, first working for the US Embassy, then moving on to produce theatrical performances.

Ribbons created *Cheeky*

*Monkey Theater* in 2007, which has since presented *I Heart Beijing* and *Lethal English*. "In the Chinese zodiac, I'm a monkey, that's why I gave our group such a name," she said.

In *I Heart Beijing*, she relates the real-life experiences of foreigners in the city through a woman from the US who shares a small apartment with a Chinese woman. In *Lethal English*, she puts together a detective story that includes business espionage, murder and police work.



Elyse Ribbons  
Photo provided by Elyse Ribbons

Besides theatrical performances, Ribbons' team is promoting two other projects - "Shifen (Ten Minute) Festival" and "Arts Walk." At the "Shifen Festival," to be held in January, small theater groups in Beijing are scheduled to hold "short and light" performances.

Through "Arts Walk," Ribbons hopes to get more locals interested in the contemporary arts. So far, she has persuaded some galleries in the 798 Art District to open their doors to the public for free.

## Norwegian band looking to China for big break



Flare is on their second tour of China, hoping to make their mark in the local music scene.

Photo provided by Flare

By Wang Yu

The Norwegian band Flare returned for its second tour of China this November. Compared with its trip to Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces last year, the cities involved in this year's tour, like Beijing and Wuhan, have a bigger music scene and the band is hoping to get its big break here.

### A band of scientists

Flare was formed in 1999 in Bergen, Norway by vocalist Tiam Dee, guitarist Chris Star and drummer Baz Owen. Like many band members from northern Europe, they have played in heavy metal bands that sound like Metallica, Slayer and Entombed.

"After listening to the songs of Terry Hall, I decided to change my style and make melodious songs rather than powerful guitar riffs," Dee said, referring to a British pop rock

singer who is also the former vocalist of The Specials.

Besides music, each member of Flare is busy with a regular job - as a cancer researcher, electrical engineer and aquacultural engineer. "We work the first four days of the week and leave the rest to music. It's easy for us to arrange the time and we have a 5-week holiday each year which can be used for tours," Dee said.

But this band of scientists has a plan to go professional in the music industry. "We want to live every day doing music. Imagine one day you wake up with a melody rolling in your head and you can develop it into a song in a studio as soon as possible without disturbance," Dee said.

### Looking for a break overseas

Though the band released albums in 2005 and 2008, the

members know they have just begun their musical career. And they are looking to countries like China to open the door. "It is hard for indie bands like us to make it in Norway," Dee said. "Powerful rock music is welcome and mainstream pop songs control the radio. So we are left trying to find opportunities in other countries."

Kangmao, vocalist of Subs, brought Flare to China last year. "We went on our first tour of China just for fun. We went to small cities like Yiwu and Ningbo, but they are still much bigger than most cities in Norway, and we think we attracted a lot of attention here," Dee said.

### The China plan

This year, Flare is in Beijing, the capital of Chinese rock and roll, where they hope to make their mark. With the assistance

of WaWaWa Music, the band has made its two albums available on the Internet to Chinese users. It is also planning to shoot a music video in the country.

Danish band Michael Learns To Rock became famous in China - and then worldwide - after they adapted a song by Hong Kong singer Zhang Xueyou. Flare's members see how the plan worked. "First you have to introduce yourself to a wider audience, and usually a pop song helps. Most world-famous bands did whatever they wanted after gaining a huge following," Dee said.

The band is hoping that playing with well-known Chinese musicians will also help its star shine. Flare tried to work out a deal with local record company Taihe Rye Music to perform with pop singer Pu

Shu, but the plan fell through. "They think the singer and us do not have the same type of music and suggested another band," guitarist Star said. "One of their songs is quite good, but the others are very pop-sounding, which we think is not suitable to us."

### Just enjoy making music

Flare performed in Beijing last Thursday and Friday, but the first show received limited attendance. The band, however, still did their best to give a brilliant performance. "We once performed in England with just seven people down there. Sometimes it frustrates us, but it's a long and tough road to success and we still have time," Dee said. "Anyway, we are not chasing fame."

"The most important thing is to enjoy life with music," drummer Owen said.



# Luxury association denies oweing UNICEF 80,000 yuan

By Venus Lee

The World Luxury Association (WLA) claimed it does not owe UNICEF about 80,000 yuan in donations contrary to the UN body's assertion. UNICEF said it will likely file a lawsuit to obtain the funds.

The dispute goes back to a charity party organized by WLA at the Four Season's Club half a year ago. UNICEF said WLA's Beijing Office promised to donate to it money raised at the party, but the promise never

materialized.

"The payment dates have been overdue for half a year. Although we have requested payment several times, there has been no action," Zhang Lei, consultant at UNICEF's information department, said.

WLA thinks UNICEF's demand is unreasonable because the association merely organized the dinner and is not a charity institution. "We hosted the party to raise donations by auctioning jewels pro-

vided by a jewelry company, but the WLA never promised to contribute the funds. Possible donors were guests who were invited," Michel Ouyang, CEO of WLA Beijing, said.

"The jewels were basically auctioned at cost at the party," he said. "The jewelry company profited less than 20,000 yuan. The rest that they kept – 60,000 yuan – was their cost price. So there was only 10,000 yuan that the company was willing to donate."

According to WLA, it suggested that UNICEF take the 10,000 yuan and other goods worth 10,000 yuan provided by them, but UNICEF refused. "UNICEF is dissatisfied with the small sum of money," Ouyang said.

UNICEF contradicted WLA's statement. Zhong Dexin, a UNICEF officer, said it will continue to negotiate with WLA over the funds, but will reserve the right to pursue legal action.

## European S&M companies are coming: Survey

By Zhao Hongyi

More small and medium-sized European companies are turning to China, confident of their prospects here, the EU Chamber of Commerce said in its Business Confidence Survey 2008 released this week in Beijing.

According to the study, the number of European S&M companies entering China has been increasing over the past decade. Most of them prefer to establish wholly-owned businesses, rather than enter into mergers and acquisitions.

"European companies are changing their strategy from using China as a manufacturing base for export to developing the local market," Joerg Wuttke, president of the chamber, said at the study's release.

"China occupies less than 10 percent of most companies' global share, which means they have great potential here," he added.

But worries persist. Most European companies complain of discrimination, protectionism, unfair implementation of environmental laws and regulations and Intellectual and Property Rights infringement.

The companies again appealed for more policy transparency and talked about the lack of senior management staff and the rising cost of human resource.

The EU Chamber of Commerce has conducted the survey annually the last five years. For the second year in a row, the chamber conducted its survey with Roland Berger, a Europe-based strategy consultant company.

The 2008 survey was conducted from June to August this year, and included 850 companies, 70 percent of which were S&M companies.

## Primitive Art and Modern Life exhibition to open



An African Art Exhibition co-hosted by the Center for Sino-Africa Cultural Exchanges and Bridge Art Center will open Sunday. The ancient living goods of the royal blood, carvings, potteries and knit weaves will be displayed at the exhibition with the theme of Primitive Art and Modern Life.

(By Venus Lee)

## UN urges end to domestic abuse

By Huang Daohen

Gao Huier, 18, a magazine model in Beijing, never imagined she would be chosen as an ambassador in the fight against domestic violence. She was selected Tuesday, when the UN in China marked International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Gao, whose parents divorced when she was young, tried to run away from home to escape her stepfather's beatings. "I was once so depressed with my family and my life," she said,

"I wondered why violence and loneliness shadowed my life."

But Gao chose not to tolerate the abuse. With the help of the Maple Women's Psychological Counseling Center, a non-profit organization in Beijing, she wrote on the Internet about the domestic abuse she had suffered, and called on females with the same experience not to suffer in silence.

Her behavior sparked a heated debate online, after which she was named the "Angel of Anti-domestic Violence" in

a competition jointly sponsored by UN China and Netease. to mark UN day.

The UN said one in five women will be subject to actual or attempted rape. Women between the ages of 15 and 44 are at greater risk of rape and domestic violence than from cancer, traffic accidents, war and malaria, it said.

"Fortunately, the Chinese government and the public have realized the urgency of the issue," Constance Thomas, head of the International Labor Orga-

nization in Beijing, said on behalf of the UN secretary-general at the ceremony Tuesday.

People need to combat attitudes and behaviors that condone, tolerate, excuse or ignore violence committed against women, she said.

A recent survey shows one-third of the country's 267 million families have witnessed domestic violence. Complaints against domestic violence, too, have increased to an average of 40,000 a year from 2005 to 2007, according to figures from the All-China

Women's Federation.

Not surprisingly, more than 94 percent of the victims are women, said Chen Benjian, director of the China Law Society's Center for Combating Domestic Violence.

"In traditional Chinese society, men played the dominant role both inside and outside the home, and women were expected to be their subordinates," Chen said, "As a result, domestic violence was tolerated."

"We need an anti-domestic violence law," she said.

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# Capoeira seeks local following

By Zhang Dongya

The elderly who exercised or gathered at the Temple of Heaven were captivated by two foreign men who one day appeared and performed some kind of street dance. The old people were curious about the movements. Later, they were taught to play strange musical instruments to accompany the dance.

This was a scene that appeared in a program produced by SexyBeijing.tv, an Internet TV station that focuses on Beijing life. Jamel Mims and Leroy Philpotts were the men on the show, doing Capoeira, an Afro-Brazilian dance form that incorporates self-defense maneuvers and is now finding a following in Beijing.

## Capoeira classes in town

Ed Zingu, 27, who came to Beijing last December from Cape Town, runs a Capoeira class at Workers' Stadium. He has both Chinese and foreign students, including Mims and Philpotts who performed at the Temple of Heaven.

Zingu, who has been studying Capoeira for about seven years, got involved in the art in his native South Africa. "It started out as a group of five friends who had a love for Capoeira and it developed over time into one of South Africa's strongest groups," he said. "The thought of stopping was just not something I was willing to consider."

His Beijing classes began in mid-September, with beginners' classes every Sunday and advanced classes every Thursday and Friday. Zingu teaches the advanced classes, while Tord Loevdal, a Norwegian former student, teaches the beginners. It requires a lot of time and patience to master Capoeira, so Zingu said he tried to create an environment where students could train as much as their schedules allowed.

About 20 students are now enrolled in their classes – a mix of foreign students, young pro-



A Capoeira class at Workers' Stadium.

Photo by Katjusa Kovacic

fessionals, teachers and members of the diplomatic community. "They are as diverse as can be imagined. People from five continents but with a common love for Capoeira," Zingu said.

## Dance and martial art

People interchangeably use "dance" and "martial art" to describe Capoeira, but enthusiasts prefer the latter.

"It's a holistic martial art, but more than just a fighting style," Zingu said. "It's filled with tradition, dance, acrobatics and music. Moreover, it's a conversation between two people which at times is fun and can progress to being challenging and at times dangerous."

Philpotts, who appeared on SexyBeijing.tv, said: "It's definitely a 'martial art,' but disguised as a dance. So if you wanted, you could use it to defend yourself."

Its students say Capoeira cre-

ates a sense of family, which is what they enjoy most. There is a strong sense of connectivity between Capoeira practitioners in Beijing, Zingu added.

Philpotts, from the Netherlands, attends class every week. "Though I have been studying Capoeira for five years, I learn something new each class," he said. "There is no ultimate level and you never stop learning."

A beginner from Malaysia called Fang Enting, a student at the Beijing Film Academy, was only on his second class but was getting hooked. "I like it because it's different from typical dances and reflects African culture," he said.

## Seeking more locals

Although Capoeira has penetrated Beijing and Shanghai, it is still not as popular as it is in other countries. "Capoeira in China is not as popular as it is in the West or in Japan where you can easily

find people dancing Capoeira in the street," Jamel Mims, the other performer in the video, said.

Zingu has only two regular Chinese students: Ding Dong, who plays samba music that helps him learn Capoeira, and Polly, a dancer who got to know the art through a free workshop in August. He hopes more Chinese people will join them.

"To attract more locals has always been the plan," Zingu said. "Everywhere else that I've been, Capoeira groups have been full of local residents. I think this is one of the few instances where it's almost completely foreign."

Perhaps it is the language barrier or the differences in defining martial arts, but Zingu is not sure how to bridge the gap. He is planning, however, to put together a group that will perform around town and bring Capoeira nearer to the locals.

## Event

### Booktalk: Smoke and Mirrors

Despite interaction between India and China spanning over 2,000 years, it is remarkable that their people know so little of each other. Pallavi Aiyar's new book *Smoke and Mirrors: An Experience of China* raises questions about the deeper concerns of development and freedom that face both countries.

As these two countries grow in economic strength and international influence, understanding the differential nature of their achievements and failings is a necessity for a global audience. *Smoke and Mirrors* breaks down many clichés and opens new gateways through which to understand China and India.

Where: The Bookworm, 4 Nan Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

When: December 2, 7:30 pm

Cost: 20/30 yuan

Tel: 6586 9507

### Toning Drum culture

Toning School of Drumming will organize a group drumming activity, to help people make new friends and understand different music culture.

Where: 7 Sanlitun Bei Xiaojie (opposite Jenny Lous), Chaoyang District

When: November 29, 7:30-9 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8447 2638

### Book reading and signing: Riley and the Sleeping Dragon

The book, written by Tania McCartney, is about a boy who flies his little red plane all over Beijing in search of the elusive Sleeping Dragon. The book is a collection of gorgeous black and white photos taken around Beijing, as well as cute illustrations by Canadian artist, Mo Qovaizi.

Where: Garden Books, 44 Guanghua Lu, Chaoyang District

When: November 30, 3-5pm

Tel: 6585 1435

(By He Jianwei)



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# Yikatong card expands power and reach

By Annie Wei

Yikatong, the Beijing Municipal Administration and Communications Card, has allowed users to save 60 percent on bus fares since 2007. The card now gives users access to more public services, in addition to discounts from selected vendors.

## Entrance to parks

The Beijing Parks Administration has announced that beginning next year, Yikatong holders can pay annual park entrance fees through their card, eliminating the extra 3 yuan when they buy a park card. At the same time, Yikatong will allow one-time park visitors to get into 16 of the most popular parks in town, like the Summer Palace, Temple of Heaven and Beihai Park.

## Buses in Shunyi

Beginning Monday, 33 bus routes in Shunyi will join the Yikatong system that gives commuters a 60 to 80-percent discount on a bus ride.

## Parking lots

Leading parking company Kingdy Parking will launch its Yikatong payment service as early as December. According to the company, Yikatong holders can use their card to pay parking fees at 60 parking lots, including popular ones at the Workers' Stadium, the National Theater, Terminal 3 of the Beijing airport, Zhongguancun Plaza and Fortune Plaza in the Central Business District. To make the deal even more attractive, Kingdy said the company might offer discounts to drivers



Yikatong is expected to sell 15 million cards in Beijing by the end of the year.

CFP Photo

that pay through Yikatong.

## Public phones

Public phones with the Yikatong logo will offer cheaper rates than other public phones, Beijing Netcom said. A local phone call made using Yikatong will be charged 0.2 yuan for the first 3 minutes and 0.1 yuan for each succeeding minute. Domestic long distance calls will be charged 0.2 yuan per minute, cheaper than rates using a landline.

Such public phone service can be found along Chang'an Avenue and other places with huge number of pedestrians like Wang-

fujing, Olympic venues, airport and bus stations.

## Other uses

Yikatong is now accepted in most taxis, supermarkets and cinemas.

## Where to buy or return your Yikatong

There are about 1,000 places where you can buy a Yikatong, including subway and bus stations. You just need to pay a 20-yuan deposit on top of whatever credit you purchase.

There are fewer places that will process the return of deposits when a card is surrendered.

Some addresses include Bus 28 station in Dongdaqiao, Chaoyang District; Bus 328 station on the west side of Andingmen, Dongcheng District; Bus 15 station at the Beijing Zoo, Xicheng District; Bus 335 station on Fuchengmen, Xicheng District; China Citic Bank at Jiuxianqiao, near the 798 Art District; and China Citic Bank at Weigongquan, near Renmin University.

For more information, call the Beijing Public Transportation Office at 96166; China Citic Bank at 95558; or the Agricultural Bank of China at 95599.

# Four percent of AIDS cases are expats



The health bureau is intensifying its information drive.

CFP Photo

By Annie Wei

Upwards of 700 new AIDS cases were reported from January to October this year, according to data released this week by Beijing Municipal Health Bureau. The number is down 23 percent from the same period last year, which had 973 new cases.

Of the total, 77 percent, or 583 cases, were foreigners and Chinese nationals without a Beijing hukou (household identification card). The bureau's data from 1985 to the end of October 2008 shows 219 out of 5,635 cases, or 4 percent, were foreigners.

Data from the bureau shows that among 5,635 cases, 35 percent of

AIDS cases are contracted through sex, 34 percent through intravenous drugs, 12 percent through blood transfusions and 1 percent passed from mother to infant.

Among the 755 newly reported cases, 33 percent were homosexual men, much higher than male heterosexuals at 22 percent.

According to the entry and exit bureau, foreigners applying for a long-term visa are required to undergo a health examination that includes an AIDS test. Foreigners living in China found to be infected with AIDS will be deported.

Diplomatic and travel visa holders can get into China without a health file.

Most big hospitals in Beijing already have departments that conduct anonymous HIV tests. Below are two clinics specializing in AIDS and STDs:

## Beijing AIDS and STD Center

Where: 16 Hepingli Zhong Jie, Dongcheng District  
Tel: 6421 2461

## Chaoyang STD Prevention Clinic

Where: 10 Xinyuanli, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6464 7997 (closed on the weekends)

HIV self-test kits are available on hivtest.cn

# How to pay traffic fines recorded by camera

By Wang Yu

Most drivers check their violation records online after breaking a traffic regulation. If the driver does not pay the fine on time, the fine for late payment could get crippling.

The traffic management bureau can charge the driver a late payment fine of a 3-percent daily interest. There is no maximum amount for the overdue fine: it will continue to accumulate until the driver pays up. A driver in Henan Prov-

ince learned in 2005 that he had run a red light two years before and that his total fine, including the late payment dues, amounted to 14,000 yuan.

In Beijing, drivers can check their record on the Web site, bjytl.gov.cn. If the driver's violation is caught on camera, he or she has to get the bill from the traffic police department with jurisdiction over the area where the violation happened. The fine can be

paid at any Industrial and Commercial Bank branch. The Web site, however, does not have an English version.

Drivers, including foreigners, can also call hotline number 1688 8122 to check if they have been caught on camera. The hotline charges 3 yuan per minute, but does not have a service in English.

Meanwhile, authorities are planning to make modifications to traffic policies which will allow

them to disclose the location of traffic cameras.

The government revised traffic violation regulations, saying besides the disclosure of the traffic camera locations, records must be made available within 25 days after a traffic violation and that authorities should give errant drivers notice by E-mail and SMS.

The new rules also state that late payment fine cannot exceed the cost of the basic fine.

## ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: [weiyi@ynet.com](mailto:weiyi@ynet.com)

**I'm a foreigner living in Tianjin and would like to know how I can get to Beijing's international airport since few international airlines fly to Tianjin.**

In Tianjin, take a bus from the ticketing booth of Air China's office building at Nanjing Lu, which can take you directly from Tianjin to Beijing airport. The first bus for the Beijing Capital International Airport leaves at 4 am; the last one leaves at 6 pm. A bus leaves every 30 minutes after 6 am.

To get back to Tianjin from the Beijing Capital, take a bus at Gate 15 on the 1st floor of Terminal 2. Buses are available from 7 am to 12 midnight, with a bus leaving every 30 minutes after 9 am.

**I'm new to Beijing and want to buy inexpensive furniture. Is there a good-quality but cheaper alternative to Ikea?**

In metropolitan Beijing, you can go to Macalline or the Chengwaicheng furniture mall. If you do not mind travelling to neighboring Hebei Province, you can also check out a building called Jinyaoshi (Golden Key) in Xianghe County. Note down the brand of the furniture you like in fancy furniture stores and you can find the same ones for a much lower price in Jinyaoshi. Most stores there provide free delivery all over Beijing, but give at least 20 days' lead time for orders.

## Hongxing Macalline

Where: Qiugezhuang Bridge, Xisihuan, Fengtai District

For a group of at least five customers, call 5118 8884 to book a free bus ride.

## Chengwaicheng

Where: 308 Chengshousi Lu, Nansihuan, Fengtai District  
Tel: 6765 1234

## Jinyaoshi

Where: Xiushui Jie, Xianghe County, Langfang, Hebei Province

Tel: 0316 8338 805

How to get there: Take bus 938 at the Beijing Railway Station (7 yuan).

**I'm thinking of having plastic surgery done in Beijing. Can you recommend any good hospitals or clinics?**

Some people recommend big state-owned hospitals like the Sino-Japanese Hospital. Many big Chinese celebrities have reportedly had their faces done there.

**Where can I get more information for my essay about Hutong demolition?**

There is a talk on Hutong demolition sponsored by Chinese Culture Club (CCC) next Saturday. Call them at 6432 9341 for more details.

(By Wei Ying)



# Marriage of theater and dance

## Martha Graham Dance Company takes the stage



Woody Allen and Martha Graham

By He Jianwei

Martha Graham defined contemporary dance the way Pablo Picasso defined painting and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart defined music. The American dancer and choreographer has become a legend in dance history.

This weekend, the Martha Graham Dance Company perform at the National Center for the Performing Arts (NCPA), bringing 10 classic works to two performances with the themes Mythology and Fable and the American Chronicle.

"The masterworks of Martha Graham will reach the new Chinese audience and – even more – give them insight to American culture of the 20th century since it is deeply embedded in Martha's works," Jenet Eilber, art director of the dance company, said.

**B**orn in 1894 in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, Martha Graham was the eldest daughter of a prominent and strict Presbyterian doctor. At age 16, Graham saw a poster for a dance performance in Los Angeles. It was a revelation for her, and she decided to devote her life to dance.

In 1926, she set up her own dance company, the oldest and most celebrated contemporary one in the US. Her first performance in her own dance company came on April 18 that year. The first major American dance critic John Martin said her performance was the birth of American contemporary dance.

Graham invented a new language of movement and used it to reveal the passion, rage and ecstasy of the human experience. Her early dance was not well-received by her audience.

"Before Martha's revolution in the 1930s, dance was decorative and escapist. Her technique was based on natural human body language .... It was theatrical, athletic and some say erotic," Eilber said.

Graham danced and choreographed for over 70 years, and during that time she was the first dancer to perform at The White House. "I have spent all my life on dance and being a dancer. It's permitting life to use you in a very intense way. Sometimes it is not pleasant. Sometimes it is fearful. But nevertheless it is inevitable," said Graham, who died in 1991.

Eilber worked with Graham as a dancer beginning 1972. "Martha was not able to move easily. She sat in a chair in the studio every day, directing her ballets and creating new pieces," Eilber said.

What impressed her most about Graham was "a talent that I believe was the basis of her genius. She could understand people just by looking at them and watching the way they moved. She immediately and intuitively knew who you were, your strengths and your insecurities," she said.

Graham's ability to reveal the truth about life through dance was the most precious gift left to Eilber and the company. "Her instinctual connection to deep human emotions influences us most. I have danced Graham ballets from Singapore to St Louis. Audiences everywhere recognize themselves in [her] dances. She connects us all as human beings," she said.

Many artists worked with the company before, such as Woody Allen, Aaron Copland and Madonna. In the mid-1970s, Woody Allen took three months of dance courses at the company. "Graham understood the most essential [parts] of theater, including movement, music and drama. Woody was fascinated with the drama and he tried to [understand] how Graham could have a deeper connection with the audience," she said.

During their Beijing's debut, the company will perform 10 repertoires. "In my opinion, Night Journey, which is on our Myths and Fables program, is Martha's greatest choreographic work. The dance is the greatest example of many of Martha's innovations. It is a most special example of her revolutionary use of time on stage," she said.

Night Journey tells the classic Greek myth of Oedipus, the man who married his mother and had children by her. "But Martha tells this story from the woman's point of view. The dance begins at the end of the story. Queen Jocasta, having realized the truth – that she has married her own son – lifts the rope above her head and is about to end her life. The entire dance takes place in her memory in the seconds before death," she said.

Greek myths are better received by audiences than her second program: American Chronicle. "Although the Graham dances were born out of American thought and philosophy, they are recognized as masterpieces because they are timeless and they provide a universal message. The style may be foreign to our new Chinese audience, but the themes and emotional messages are recognizable worldwide. Martha's work is about human to human communication," she said.

Even though the dances they present are decades old, they strive to make their impact current and powerful. "In my direction of the company, I believe it is important to keep the emotional message of each dance powerful and relevant to each new generation," she said.

Graham despised the term "modern dance" and preferred "contemporary dance." She thought the concept of what was "modern" was constantly changing and was thus inexact as a definition. "Martha loved the fact that each new generation of dancers was more and more physical and technically adept. She allowed dancers to use their increased techni-

**“ Her technique was based on natural human body language .... It was theatrical, athletic and some say erotic. ”**

**“ She could stand people looking at them watching they move ”**



Errand Into the Maze



Phaedra



Embattled Garden



Diversion of Angels



# er and dance

**“ Now that the art form is about 100 years old, we are asking how to honor and celebrate the masterpieces of the early years. ”**

cal level, but she always insisted that the emotional communication remain true,” she said.

They also work in other ways to find a new way to present dance that serves the new audiences. “Contemporary dance has always been about the new – each new generation of artists has rejected what has gone before. Now that the art form is about 100 years old, we are asking how to honor and celebrate the masterpieces of the early years,” she said.

Could it be possible to move forward and at the same time celebrate the past?

It was a question that contemporary dance faced for the first time after Eilber took over the artistic director position in 2005.

“We are adding context to programs and creating programs that will illuminate different aspects of Martha’s connection to all areas of culture such as theater, music, psychology, politics, poetry and literature,” she said.

Eilber worked with NCPA and created thematic programs for Beijing’s performances that will give more context to Chinese audiences. “We want to provide many points of access to Martha’s work for different types of audiences. We have also commissioned new work that relates to the Graham works. For example, we premiered the Lamentation Variations in 2007, which includes short dances by three noteworthy new choreographers all inspired by Graham’s iconic solo, Lamentation,” she said.

They also thought about how to incorporate technology into their performances to give the audience more information. “We have started with simple steps such as adding projected supertitles to Clytemnestra, Martha’s only full-evening ballet. We also have a program that connects several dances with narration and projection of photos and film clips to place the dances in their historic context,” she said.

Alan Kriegsman of the *Washington Post* referred to the company as “one of the seven wonders of the artistic universe.” Graham’s dance perfectly connects dance and theater.

Photos provided by Martha Graham Dance Company

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**“ She allowed dancers to use their increased technical level, but she always insisted that the emotional communication remain true. ”**

Circe



Heretic



Satyric Festival Song

**Where:** Opera House, National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

**When:** November 28, 7:30 pm, for Mythology and Fable; November 29 – 30, 7:30 pm, for American Chronicle

**Admission:** 600 yuan for VIPs, 400, 300, 200 or 100 yuan normal tickets

**Tel:** 6655 0000



# Author rallies troops for a green revolution

By Jin Zhu

After helping millions of readers to see the world in a new way with his bestselling *The World Is Flat*, Thomas L. Friedman has taken the plunge into the green-tech fray in his essential *Hot, Flat, and Crowded* (448pp, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, US \$27.95).

Friedman foresees a horrible future for the world.

"More and more people can afford to use modern commodities, which are powered by energy sources, such as computers, refrigerators and televisions. The energy demands increase continually [and] oil will never be cheap again ...," he said.

He describes affluence as a horrible social disease or indulgent fetish spreading out from the US to every other country.

Friedman explains how global warming, rapidly growing populations and the astonishing expansion of the world's middle class through globalization have produced a planet that is "hot,

flat and crowded." To his way of thinking, the earth is becoming dangerously unstable.

"America's problem is that we have lost our groove and national propose as a country since 9/11. And the world's problem is that it is getting hot, flat and crowded, which as a convergence is driving a lot of negative trends," he says.

*The New York Times*, which reviewed his book, said the US can solve its own problems by finding a solution to the world's: Friedman's green revolution.

"In just a few years, it will be too late to fix things, unless the US steps up now and takes the lead in a worldwide effort to replace the current wasteful, inefficient energy practices with a strategy for using clean and efficiency energy," Friedman said.

In his fresh and provocative statement, he describes the green revolution as one like no other.

"It will be the biggest inno-

vation project in American history. It will be hard, not easy, and it will change everything from what you put into your car to what you see on your electric bill," he says. "The innovation will take a coordinated, top-to-bottom approach, from the White House to corporations to consumers."

But for those troubles, the payoff will be more than clean air. It will give the US something it has not seen in more than half a century: an outlet for its creativity, intelligence and concern for the common good, he says.

Friedman also talks about China. The eleventh Five-Year Plan stipulates that by 2010, energy consumption my decrease 20 percent from consumption levels in 2005. Hardly an easy goal, he says.

But China has a direction, and officials know what they need to do.

"[The] future is the result of our choices, not our certain fate," Friedman says.



## THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*

WHY WE NEED A GREEN REVOLUTION — AND HOW IT CAN RENEW AMERICA



## 'Luck has never been shy with me'

By Charles Zhu

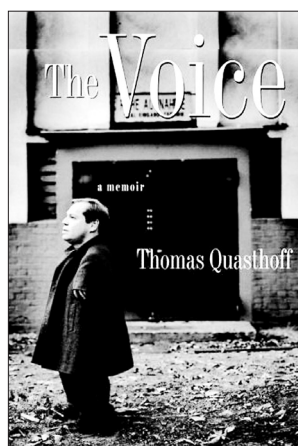
Although his reputation evolved from his performance of romantic songs, the Lieder and oratorios, Thomas Quasthoff has proven himself to have a remarkable range from the Baroque cantatas of Bach to solo jazz improvisations.

Quasthoff, 49, is one of the finest singers in recent decades, and his book *The Voice* (241pp Pantheon Books, US \$24.95) is now available in English, translated by Kirsten Stoldt Wittenborn.

He was born in Hildesheim, Germany, with serious birth defects caused by his mother's exposure to thalidomide, a drug used to combat her morning sickness. The singer is unusually short – about 1.3 meters tall – due to failed development of the long bones in his legs. His hands are flipper-like, a consequence of phocomelia, though his head and torso are normal.

Quasthoff faced prejudice and sadistic experiences as a boy. Yet, with unusual courage, he stood up to the challenges of his body and overcome his resentment of envious musicians "who believed I got things only because I was different."

Though disabled, his talent has earned him powerful supporters such as Claudio



Abbado and Simon Rattle. "Luck has never been shy with me," he said.

He was denied admission to the music conservatory in Hanover, Germany, on account of his physical inability to play the piano, and chose to study voice in private.

In his memoir, Quasthoff described how he, like Beethoven, marched from darkness towards light, from chilling winter to sweet spring, and how he, unlike Beethoven, enjoyed the love from a kind father and mother, brother and girlfriends. Most luckily, he had met teachers who recognized his talent for singing.

His musical career began in 1988 when he won the ARD International Music Competition in Munich, earning praise

from the baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau. In 2003, he made his operatic debut as Don Fernando in Beethoven's *Fidelio* at the Salzburg Festival, conducted by Simon Rattle. He made his American debut in San Francisco in September of 2004.

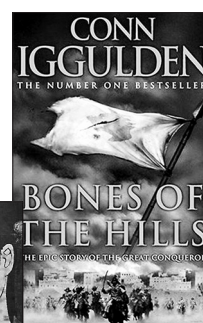
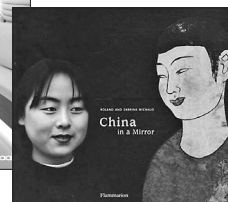
Quasthoff won a Grammy Award for Best Classical Vocal Performance that same year for his performance of "Schubert: Lieder" with Orchestra with von Otter and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe conducted by Abbado. He won another Grammy for Best Classical Vocal Performance in 2006 with Rainer Kussmaul leading members of the RIAS Chamber Choir of Berlin Baroque Soloists in their recording of J.S. Bach: Cantatas.

He won this year's Grammy for best Choral Performance for "Brahms: Ein Deutsches Requiem," under the baton of Simon Rattle.

Today, he is a full-time voice professor and performs 50 times a year. He first taught at the Music Academy of Detmold, Germany, and then at the Hanns Eisler School of Music.

His musical interest ranges from Bach to Modernism, and from jazz to rock. In 2006 he released his first jazz album: *The Jazz Album: Watch What Happens*.

## CNPIEC Bookstore book listing



The China National Publication Import and Export Corporation's (CNPIEC) bookstore recommends the following new arrivals to *Beijing Today* readers.

**Genghis: Bones of the Hills**  
By Conn Iggulden, 416 pp, HarperCollins Publishers Ltd, 120 yuan

This powerful and exhilarating third novel in Conn Iggulden's Conqueror series follows the adventures of Genghis Khan. The fatherless boy, exiled from his tribe, whom readers have followed through *Wolf of the Plains* and *Lords of the Bow*, has grown into a great king. He has united the warring tribes and attacked the great cities of his oldest enemies. The sense of his ambition and power, the relationships with his wives, sons and trusted aides and the sweep of his conquests are united by a master storyteller.

**China in a Mirror**  
By Sabrina Michaud & Roland Michaud, 240 pp, Flammarion, 500 yuan

Seasoned photographers Roland and Sabrina Michaud

pair traditional Chinese artwork – some of which dates back eight centuries – with their own photographs of China taken over 20 years. The pairings evoke an enduring civilization rooted in faith and tradition, and offer a striking comparison between the land, faces, customs and lifestyles of China and the Chinese, past and present.

**Beijing Architecture & Design**

By Daab Books, 240 pp, Daab, 425 yuan

Apart from being one of Asia's largest metropolises, Beijing is a visual challenge. When the Olympic Committee accepted Beijing's bid to host the 2008 Olympic Games, the city began a transformation. Olympic-driven developments – from sports and cultural infrastructure to business and commercial buildings – have transformed a landscape characterized by conservative architecture. The emerging middle-class lives, works and plays in Western-style residential buildings, offices and malls.

(By Zhang Dongya)



# Local cosplayers take on the past

By Jin Zhu

Generations ago, Chinese people cast a classic expression when photographed: their upright posture, toothless smile and patriotic resolution captured in sepia.

Young cosplayers are taking on these archetypes of photos past, imitating their gestures and expressions in modern shots.



"Bow your head a little, throw out your chest and suck in your belly, then sit upright. More passion!" orders the photographer as his young subject poses before the camera.

Metroer, a lifestyle Web site, is holding photo sessions for "cosplay of the past."

"Dozens of years ago, taking a photograph was serious business. The facial expressions, gestures and clothes in old photos from the 1960s to 1980s are quite different from modern photos. And those expressions are what draw young cosplayers," Yan Qiao, the event's chief organizer, says.

In modern photos, the subjects are more emotional and express their feelings, Yan says. "In the past, having

one's photo taken was not such a free experience. Photos were taken only for presenting to one's parents, relatives and friends. Now it is about how you want to present yourself," he says.

His thoughts are reflected in the cosplayers.

These students do not simply dress up in their soldier uniforms, sailor shirts, student uniforms and tunics. Their presence before the camera carries their own understandings about years past.

## Personal photos

The expressions in old portraits are all the same: squinting eyes with a passionate smile.

"The people who cosplay for these photos tend to have a more modern, exaggerated expression," Yan said.

Many of the popular props hearken back to yesteryear, like red flowers pinned to uniforms as a symbol of honor.

Braden, an Australian, was drawn to the cosplay event. He has on a marine's shirt and a red scarf with blush powder on his face like a Young Pioneer.

In the spirit of the past era, women dressing up for these photos wear skirts long enough to cover the knees or touch ground.



Everything is unmistakably from yesteryear, except the people.

The matching expression is a backward glance or smile.

"A lot of people say it is out of place for them to wear old clothes while acting so modern, but I think it is part of the cosplay charm," Yan says.

## Newlyweds are red

Newlyweds during the Cultural Revolution had to chant quotations from Chairman Mao and wear his buttons in their wedding photos.

But many cosplayers are eager to emulate the experience. Metroer says most cosplayers were born in the 1980s and work in fashion and design.

One young couple who works at Beijing TV is taking a series of old-fashioned wedding photos.

"Although my wife is already pregnant, we still want to take some wedding photos just for nostalgia. It's a good chance to see what our parents went through," the husband says.

## Photos for three

Group photos are popular with the younger

students.

Many of the group cosplayers imitate Cultural Revolution photos, but with a slight twist on the props for comedy.

The most-praised photo is one of three girls acting as shop assistants at a state-owned store.

"We asked the girls to wear uniforms and hold an abacus, loudspeaker and old-fashion bag. Their actions were really exaggerated and they laughed really loud," Yan says. "Such expressions could never appear in a real old photo, but it was part of how these cosplayers reforge the past."

## Opposing shots

In one planned group photo, the photographers shot multiple pictures with opposing expressions.

In front of a red flag, modern men and women clutch their Little Red Books with the serious demeanor of a 70s child.

The same group relaxes their expressions in the next shot and puts on a more modern face.

"The idea was that we would help people find release from their daily roles by switching to new gestures, new expressions and a new style of life," Yan says.



The student's presence reflects their own ideas about the past.

Photos provided by Metroer



Modern expressions are juxtaposed with classic dress.



# Make yourself a magician



Lu's trick with the vanishing red cloth, 60 yuan

## A base camp for tricks

"Hey guys, I can guess which card you've chosen, believe it or not." Flashing playing cards in their hands, three young fellows attract a group of by-standers to watch their trick.

Magic Base Camp lies underground in one of the hottest places in town for young people – Xidan's 77th Street. Over 2,000 kinds of magic kits can be found here, which is worthy of the name of the shop. For magic fans, this is a must-stop place where they can buy equipment not available anywhere else in town.

Manager Lu Cuicui showed a "disappearing trick" using a handkerchief. She first took out a small piece of red cloth (60 yuan) and grabbed it with her left hand. She pushed the hanky inside her left fist until it was all hidden. With her right hand pointing to the left, Lu opened her clenched left fist to reveal the hanky gone. It was hard to imagine where the cloth had vanished

in the blink of an eye and in front of so many people, but Lu said it was a trick that people could master in 20 minutes.

Behind the shop's purple gauze curtain is a classroom for magic students. Those who buy kits at the shop can get free lessons.

### Magic Base Camp 77th Street

Where: B1, 77th Street, Xidan Cultural Plaza, 108 Xidan Bei Dajie, Xicheng District  
Open: 10 am – 9:30 pm  
Tel: 6601 0012

### Magic Base Camp Wudaokou

Where: 2/F, Wudaokou Shopping Mall, Xueyuan Lu, Haidian District

Open: 9 am – 6 pm

### Magic Base Camp Jinwuxing

Where: Jinwuxing Terminal Market, Sidaokou, Haidian District  
Open: 9 am – 6 pm  
Tel: 6222 6235

By Zheng Lu

Is seeing believing? Not always, least of all in the world of magic. But you can put people in awe showing them little magic tricks. Magicians are mysterious, as if they were beings from an enchanted planet. But why stand there agape at their skills if you can join the club? Whatever the magic trick may be, it is definitely the result of learning and practice. Here we present you with some shops that will introduce you into the fascinating world of magic.

## Magic for social occasions

Yuan Xijun, who used to work as a McDonald's store manager, set up Qitian Magic Performance Training Center four years ago. He said his love for magic started when his staff at the fast-food chain was required to put on a performance at a company party. As the group's leader, he felt a lot of pressure to come out with a great presentation, so he turned to a magic training book.

"I studied for one week to teach myself a trick. My performance won praise at the party and that inspired me," he said. He eventually turned to magic as a full-time job.

The center specializes in teaching magic techniques, with lessons priced at 200 to 6,000 yuan for a series of classes. Kids are welcome and usually learn preliminary magic performance skills.

Yuan said that aside from magic fans and professional magicians, the center attracts office workers who want to upgrade their social skills. "It helps bridge the distance between two people who have just met," he said.

Yuan showed a trick called "Fire in the hand," which is usually performed on stage. When you say "now," a flame will appear at the center of his palm. The flame was real, but his hand did not get burnt. The secret lies in a little tool (200 yuan) which operates on the same principle as a cigarette lighter.

"You only practice for a few minutes to achieve the wonderful result which for singing and dancing will take years," he said. The center often takes their students to parks and nursing homes to perform for free.

### Qitian Magic Performance Training Center Guoyi Communication Plaza

Where: 3531, 3/F, Guoyi Communication Plaza, Gongzhufen Roundabout, Haidian District  
Open: 9:30 am – 6:30 pm  
Tel: 6221 1979

### Qitian Magic Performance Training Center Auchan

Where: 3/F, Auchan, Haidian District  
Open: 9:30 am – 6:30 pm  
Tel: 1361 111 5510



Qitian teaches magic techniques

Photos by Zheng Lu

## Play some magic off stage



Three cups, 450 yuan

While many magic shops have moved their business online, Chen Yin, the owner of Bingmiqiankun Magic Shop, believes that doing business face-to-face is still best. "Customers cannot learn the very best through the Internet," said Chen, who has been doing magic tricks for eight years.

The shop sells magic instruments and also teaches the tricks of "close-range magic," which requires greater skill since the magician's audience is sitting right in front of his or her face.

Cups and Balls is among these tricks. The tools are three little balls and three cups (450 yuan). First, place a cup upside-down on a table with a ball on its bottom, then pile another cup on top and put another ball on its bottom and the same with the third set. As the magician taps the bottom of the top cup gently, the ball disappears. When he turns over the three cups, you will find the three balls inside the bottom cup. How can this be? Magic is the answer.

### Bingmiqiankun Magic Shop

Where: 066, 6/F, SoShow, Chongwen District  
Open: 10 am – 8 pm  
Tel: 1581 115 2552



# Hot and cool snack in one

By Gan Tian

Starch noodles, or *liangfen* in Chinese, combines the characters for “cool” and “powder,” hinting that this is an ideal snack for those in need of some refreshment. *Beijing Today* finds a restaurant that offers the snack and has a special recipe to take the edge off a long week at work.

## Hometown treasure

Liangfen, which has the consistency of really firm Jell-O, is a signature snack of Yunnan Province; each town has its own version available in local restaurants and street stalls. But the vinegar and chili sauce in this dish is inspired by the taste of neighboring Sichuan Province. Other sauce variations are bean starch and Chinese black vinegar.

Xi'an, the capital of Shaanxi Province, has its own bean jelly to boast of - *liangpi'r*, a cold noodle with vinegar and hot pepper powder.

## Home-made snack

Liangfen is not difficult to make, but requires hours of time. Yang Chen, a cooking-lover who likes to develop home recipes, shares with us his special recipe. The most important element of this snack is its sauce, Yang said. But you do not need to stick to his recipe, he said. You can use any ingredients that you love.

### Ingredients

2 3/4 cups water, 1/2 cup mung-bean starch, 1/2 teaspoon salt  
Sauce Ingredients  
2 tablespoons soy sauce, 1 tablespoon Chinese black vinegar, 2 teaspoons sugar, 2 teaspoons Sichuan pepper oil, 1 teaspoon red chili oil, 1 teaspoon fresh ginger, finely grated and peeled, 1/2 teaspoon garlic, finely grated, 3 large scallions, shredded and 1 daikon, cut into strings

Top with chopped scallion greens and chopped roasted peanuts

### Process

Prepare the liangfen. Bring water, mung-bean starch and salt to a boil in a 2- to 3-quart heavy saucepan. Boil over moderate heat, stirring constantly, until mixture is very thick and translucent. It usually takes three minutes. Transfer to an 20-centimeter square baking dish and cool to room temperature, about 45 minutes. Lastly, cover surface of dish with plastic wrap and chill until noodles are firm. This takes more than two hours.

The sauce preparation will differ according to individual taste. Generally, put soy sauce, vinegar, sugar, oils, ginger and garlic in a large bowl and stir until sugar is dissolved.

Run a thin knife around side of liangfen to loosen it from dish, then put it onto a cutting board. Cut it into two or three strips, then cut each strip crosswise into 1/4-inch-thick slices. Carefully transfer to sauce in bowl, then gently stir in scallions and Chinese black vinegar.

Yang suggests this dish be served along with other food. For example, Chicken Slices with Liangfen can be done within a minute by just adding some chicken slices to the noodles.



The sauce of liangfen can vary according to individuals.



Yunnan Liangqiaofen at Club Camp, 26 yuan



Club Camp is a Yunnan-cuisine restaurant at daytime, but turns into a club at night.

## Twist taste

Club Camp, which features a large dance floor, started out as a bar and eventually offered Yunnan dishes. But it tries to go a step beyond the ordinary by adding Indian and Thai ingredients to some of its dishes.

It is also offering liangfen with a twist: milk-white noodles is cut into squares and served with green vegetables, red peppers, peanuts and black sauce.

He Guibin, the restaurant chef, said they use buckwheat seeds instead of wheat to make the noodles. Buckwheat seeds carry the “wild” flavor of nature and when made into liangfen, turn out very smooth and clear.

### Club Camp

Where: F6, Building 8, Gongti Xi Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 11:30 am – 2 pm for lunch; 2-5 pm for afternoon tea; 6:30-11 pm for dinner; 11 pm – 3 am for late night drinks

Tel: 6552 4945

Photos provided by Club Camp



## Friday, November 28

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**Exhibition****The Vegetable Museum – Ju Duoqi Solo Exhibition**

Where: Paris-Beijing Photo Gallery, 4 Jiuxianqiao, Chaoyang District

When: Until January 22, daily 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8459 9263

**Wilderness – Yang Hongwei Printmaking Solo Exhibition**

Yang, who established himself

through woodblock prints, tackles “wildness” in the abstract and concrete in this exhibition.

Where: White Space Beijing, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District  
When: Until December 31, daily except Monday 11 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8456 2054

**Nightlife****Yen Black: Secret Cinema**

Where: Star Live, 79 Hepin Xi Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 11 pm

Admission: 70-200 yuan

Tel: 5123 3866

**Moses Hazy**

This Finnish rock outfit plays ‘70s-style classic rock with all the distortion, harmony and style you would expect.

Where: Mao Live, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District  
When: 8 pm

Admission: 50-60 yuan

Tel: 6402 5080



## The making of urban mythology

By He Jianwei

Singapore design group Punk Studio has created “New World,” an imaginary theme park that aims to explore the inner world of modern society. The multimedia collection of artworks tells a dysfunctional tale of an apocalyptic society where good and evil coexist.

Rock music’s rebellious spirit is at the core of Punk Studio, made up by William Chan, Melvin Chee, Alvin Tan and Jackson Tan. They met in Singapore’s Lasalle College of the Arts and created the contemporary art and design group in 1994. They initially wanted to form a rock band, but “we had to give up this idea because we did not play very well,” Jackson Tan said.

“When we do an exhibition, we treat it like an album,” he said. First, we pick a topic, and then, collect different songs.”

“New World” was inspired by the members’ vivid memories of their childhood. “As children, we visited Har Par Villa,” Jackson Tan said, referring to the structure built in 1937 by businessman Aw Boon Haw for his brother Boon Par. “Har Par Villa is

the quintessential house of Chinese folklore,” he said.

It contains 25 clusters of statues and figurines that represent Chinese mythological characters like the Laughing Buddha and Taoist deities Fu Lu Shou. “The villa provided us fascinating and bizarre entertainment in our childhood,” he said.

The group used its distinct visual language and wit to create an urban mythological tale informed by social satire and popular culture. “New World” is a world inhabited by both men and gods with its contradictory system of universal truism and values. “It reflects society’s multicultural identity, background and environment,” Jackson Tan said.

## Upcoming

**Fest****Children’s Music Day**

Kindermusik and the Canadian International School will hold the Second Annual Music Day, which features family-friendly performances and a bazaar of children’s specialty products.

Where: Canadian International School, 38 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: November 30, 10 am – 3 pm

Admission: 25-50 yuan

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## Saturday, November 29

**Exhibition****Fable**

The exhibition is an experiment in contemporary art, straddling the boundaries of visual art,

fables and fairytales.

Where: Amelie Art Gallery (between Red Gate and White Space Gallery), 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until December 31, daily except Monday 11 am – 7 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6530 7048

**Devout Elegy – Lu Xiaochuan Photography Exhibition**

Lu’s artwork shows that like elegies, images can take on the colors of “depression.”

Where: 798 Photo Gallery, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until December 31, daily 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6438 1784, 6437 5284

**Jorg Immendorff and Ren Rong Joint Exhibition**

Where: Gallery TN, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until January 18, daily except Monday 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8459 9550

**Nightlife****Afro Soul: Afrique C’est Chic**

The Afro Soul crew adds a new

element to their monthly party of African, African-American and African-Caribbean music.

Where: Club China Doll (Tongli), 2/F Tongli Studio, Sanlitun Hou Jie, Chaoyang District

When: 9:30 pm

Admission: 30 yuan

Tel: 15810117430

**Movie****Tristan**

Where: Instituto Cervantes in Beijing, A1 Gongti Nan Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5879 9666

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## Sunday, November 30

**Exhibition****Ghosting – Li Qing Solo Exhibition**

One of the works in the exhibition was recently displayed in “The Revolution Continues: New Chinese Art” at the Saatchi Gallery in London.

Where: Iberia Center for Contemporary Art, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until January 18, daily except Monday 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6543 2086

**Annual Artists’ Exhibition**

This is an annual exhibition in which representative works of the gallery’s chosen artists will be on display.

Where: Artist Village Gallery, 1 North of Renzhuang, Song-

zhuang, Tongzhou District  
When: Until December 28, daily 8 am – midnight

Admission: 20 yuan

Tel: 6959 8343

**Huizhou Landscape – Zhang Bo Solo Exhibition**

Where: Fafa Gallery, 4 Yuyang Lu, Houshayu, Shunyi District

When: Until December 31, daily 10:30 am – 8 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8430 2587

**Movie****North Korean Film Fest**

This film showing features two North Korean movies, *Schoolgirl’s*

*Diary* and the documentary *The Game of their Lives*.

Where: Yugong Yishan (West Courtyard of the former site of Duan Qirui’s Government), 2-3 Zhangzi Zhong Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 7 pm

Admission 20-50 yuan

Tel: 6404 2711

**Desires of the Heart (Taohuayun)**

Favorite bald actor Ge You plays the man at the center of a comedy of passionate encounters in present-day Beijing.

Where: movie theaters around town

## Stage in December

**Concert****Wu Muye Piano Recital**

Who: Wu Muye

Where: Forbidden City Music Hall, inside Zhongshan Park, Dongcheng District

When: December 13, 7:30 pm

Admission: 30-380 yuan

Tel: 6559 8306

**Music from Oscar-winning Films**

Who: China Film Symphony Orchestra

Where: Beijing Concert Hall, 1 Bei Xinhua Jie, Xicheng District

When: December 13, 7:30 pm

Admission: 20-150 yuan

Tel: 6605 7006

**Batko Delorko Piano Concert**

Who: Batko Delorko

Where: Beijing Concert Hall, 1 Bei Xinhua Jie, Xicheng District

When: December 14, 7:30 pm

Admission: 20-150 yuan

Tel: 6605 7006

**Elaine Paige’s Music**

Who: Elaine Paige

Where: Great Hall of the People (west side of Tiananmen Square), Xicheng District

When: December 14, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-1,500 yuan

Tel: 5165 6039

**Music by the Shanxi Provincial Orchestra**

Who: Shanxi Provincial Orchestra

Where: National Grand Theater Music Hall (west side of the Great Hall of the People), Xicheng District

When: December 3-4, 7:30 pm

Admission: 50-380 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

**Flamenco Dance Sevilla**

Who: Maria Pages Dance Company

Where: National Grand Theater Music Hall (west side of the Great Hall of the People), Xicheng District

When: December 5-6, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-680 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

**Anne Sofie Von Otter Concert**

Who: Anne Sofie Von Otter

Where: National Grand Theater Music Hall (west side of the Great Hall of the People), Xicheng District

When: December 10, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-580 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

**Dance****Burning Steps**

Who: Song and Dance Troupe of the People’s Liberation Army’s General Political Department

Where: National Grand Theater Music Hall (west side of the Great Hall of the People), Xicheng District

When: December 1-2, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-680 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

**Stars**

Who: Guangzhou Song and Dance Company

Where: National Grand Theater Music Hall (west side of the Great Hall of the People), Xicheng District

When: December 9, 7:30 pm

Admission: 50-400 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

**Drama****The Canterville Ghost**

Who: TNT Theater Britain

Where: Mei Lanfang Grand Theater, 48 Hepingli Dajie, Xicheng District

When: December 12-14, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-680 yuan

Tel: 5833 1218

(By Li Jing)



# How many 'friends' are on your phone?

## It's warm in here

"My cell phone is totally clean because I am the only one who uses it," Jasmine Wang, 27, a marketing manager, said. She owns a Nokia N95 and reacted as many would when asked whether their phones were clean.

But she should think again, according to an article published in *Computer World*. One study found that 25,127 germs dwell on every square inch of a cell phone. For comparison, the same microscopic enemies average 49 germs per square inch on the average toilet seat.

Germs on a phone can enter the human body through the mouth and nose because of the phone's proximity to the face while talking.

The question is, how did they get there?

**1. Skin.** The most harmful bacterium often come from people themselves. Germs on the face and hands can be easily transferred onto a phone, and dead skin can whisk germs into the narrow gaps between keys.

**2. Pocket/purse.** Men usually carry their cell phones in their pockets, while women carry theirs in their purse. These locations are often warmer than outside environment, and this acts as a greenhouse in which bacteria mature. Have you ever casually placed your phone on a restaurant table? Restaurant tables are home to an inordinate quantity of germs.

**3. Battery.** Rarely do you find someone toting around a perpetually powered-down phone. But a powered-on phone draws on its battery, and that battery gives off heat. The heat may be negligible to humans, but for a tiny virus, it may be perfect for rapid growth.

**4. Other people.** Ever lend your phone to a friend or colleague? Think about all the colonies of germs they carry on their faces and hands. Next time you catch a cold, be sure to think about whether you have lent your phone to a sick person. Ask them to reimburse you for your medical bills.

By Milo Lee

Diphtheroids, streptococcus and staphylococcus.

These may be easier to type on a cell phone than to scrub off it. Cell phones are a horrible breeding ground for many types of bacteria, and carry more germs than the average toilet seat.



## Evicting unwanted guests

The easiest way to avoid catching germs from one's cell phone is to wear an earpiece – but this only works when worn all the time. Scrambling to untangle wires whenever the phone rings is a surefire way to miss that important call. Besides, it hardly looks cool.

There are no services which specialize in cleaning cell phones outside some professional maintenance and repair outlets, but extra trips are a little outdated in the 21st century. Modern people take matters into their own hands.

*Beijing Today* has a few tips on how to steer clear of these annoying, and possibly fatal viruses:

1. If your cell phone has a hands free mode or speaker phone, use it.
2. Do not use your cell phone while eating, especially if the food is greasy.
3. Putting your cell in a bag will reduce its exposure to germs.
4. Unless you have to, do not use other people's keyboards, mice or cell phones, and always keep your own clean by using anti-bacterial wipes.
5. Clean your phone regularly. Use a small brush to clean between the keys, then use an anti-bacterial wipe to clean the screen and key faces. Wipe gently or the liquid could seep into your phone. You can also use another disinfectant like rubbing alcohol and cotton swabs. Use a hair drier to dry any remaining liquid residue.

If you still doubt whether your phone is clean, you can always go to a cell phone maintenance and repair store to let a professional wipe out any bacteria using ultraviolet lamps and ozone.

CFP Photo

## Diseases bacteria can cause

We are exposed to millions of germs every day. Most can survive only five minutes on your hands, but once they make a home on your cell phone, they may live for up to two days. These happy germs include coli, klebsiella pneumonia, streptococcus, salmonella and staphylococcus, the most common, known by the familiar name "staph."

"[Staph] can cause pimples or boils on our skin. It is not very serious, but if you happen to have a cut on your skin, chances are that this germ will infect the wound and cause it

to become purulent. Fatal diseases like pneumonia can also be caused by staph," said Wang Chaojie, a doctor at Tiantongyuan Chinese Medicine Hospital's department of infectious diseases.

Wang said other listed germs can cause diarrhea. It is always a good idea to avoid using someone else's phone, especially if he or she is sick, he said.

The next time someone asks to borrow your cell phone, think twice, there is no phone call more important than your health.





By Jackie Zhang

For most people, weekends are for chilling out at home, going shopping or attending parties. But for some, weekend fun means playing soldier or police officer.

Like combatants in the Counter Strike (CS) video game, players wear camouflage uniforms and carry weapons. They carry out missions like rescuing a hostage or occupying a territory. Only those who have taken part in them can truly understand the excitement of surviving the challenges and winning the game.

## Make-believe war on weekends



### Real-life Counter Strike

Known as "war games," the games were inspired by the popular CS computer game and allowed fans to act out combat scenarios.

War games originated in the Western and Midwestern US in the 1950s, in which cowboys used paintball guns to shoot and mark livestock. They then used these guns to play shooting games and the winner was called a "survivor."

Nowadays, the game is played not only by CS aficionados, but also by company employees taking part in teambuilding activities. Since air guns are forbidden in China, CS clubs here mainly use laser guns and paintball guns.

### Plan your own game

If you know a group of war game fans, it is better for you to organize your own games. "For experienced players, self-organized events are more exciting," Wang Zhi, a game fan, said.

#### Positional warfare

Forests and mountainous areas are favorite locations of war game fans. Here they can find plenty of places to hide to protect themselves, and at the same time, to surprise enemies. The two teams aim to occupy a territory. Whoever does this first will be declared winner, or whichever team loses all of its members concedes defeat.

In forested areas, visibility is less than 20 meters on average because of foliage, so the most popular game tactic is "encounter action." Here, the two teams are sent into the forest. They will not have time to prepare a combat strategy or even know the enemy's position. All they can do is guard their backs and attack the enemy once they see them.

The silence in the forest magnifies even the smallest noise. Players need to guard against rustling plants, because this will reveal their location to enemies. The important thing is to keep on moving or you will have a greater chance of being discovered. Keep your weapon in front of your chest with the barrel pointed to the ground. Stop walking every 10 meters to look and listen. Do not walk between two trees, rather, walk close to a tree. It will serve as your shield when you encounter enemies.

"When you come across enemies or hear guns shooting, get down. Don't immediately stand up looking for enemies," Wang said.

Wang said that when you encounter



*It is important to find anything to protect yourself.*

enemies, it is a bad idea to shoot continuously from the same point. "New players usually do this. But experienced ones will shoot once, move to another place, then shoot again. This way, your enemy won't easily be able to tell the size of your team or pinpoint your location."

#### Where:

In Beijing, it is not difficult to find locations for war games. Forested and mountainous areas in the city's suburbs are good places to start. There are also the tourist attractions like Baihua Mountain, Fenghuang Mountain or scenic valleys in suburban districts.

#### Watch out:

Do research on the area where you want to hold your game. Draw a map and plan how many people will be participating and how teams will be formed. If you do not have a plan and do not know the area well, it is possible you or the other players might get lost. Then, it will really be a real-life game of survival.

*Continued on page 21...*





## Play in clubs

Inexperienced war games players may find it easier to start out at "fight clubs." These places have professional coaches to teach you the game's rules and strategies. All the equipment needed is provided by the club. Another advantage is that you can experience various kinds of war games in these clubs.

**Recommendations:**  
(Nearest to farthest from the city)

### Dragon Fighting (Longzhan) CS Club

**Where:** next to the Ming Dynasty Tombs, Changping District  
**Tel:** 6344 5888  
**Cost:** 160 yuan per person. Lunch is 260 yuan per table (seats 10 people)

The club rents out a 20-seat mini bus to take players to and from the club at 700 yuan a day.

### Leifeng CS Club

This club only accepts groups.  
**Where:** 5 kilometers northwest of downtown Huairou, Huairou District

**Tel:** 6966 2606  
**Cost:** 100 yuan per person half day, 180 yuan per person whole day (Mon - Fri)

120 yuan per person half day, 220 yuan per person whole day (weekend)

### Shanmao CS Club

**Where:** Hongzunyu Valley, Yanqihu Lake, Huairou District  
**Tel:** 5128 3308  
**Cost:** 260 per person

### Aolei CS Club

**Where:** east of Yeshanta Tower, 2 kilometers east of downtown Miyun, Miyun District  
**Tel:** 5126 3363  
**Cost:** 158 per person

### Weiqlun Club

This is also the training base of the Beijing Armed Police.

**Where:** Qianguan Ying Village, Beizangcun Town, Daxing District  
**Tel:** 5201 1922

**Cost:** 160 yuan per person half day, 300 per person whole day. 180 yuan per person for night battles

... continued from page 20

## Hostage-rescue

"It's like what we see in movies and TV shows. A person in the group is selected to be the hostage," Wang said. "But usually, no one wants to be the hostage. Everyone wants to participate in the battle." If no one wants to give in, he suggests playing a game whose loser will become the hostage.

As its name suggests, the object of the game is to rescue the hostage. The game is usually held in abandoned houses or buildings sites. The team that accomplishes the mission first is declared the winner. This requires battle strategy as well as team work.

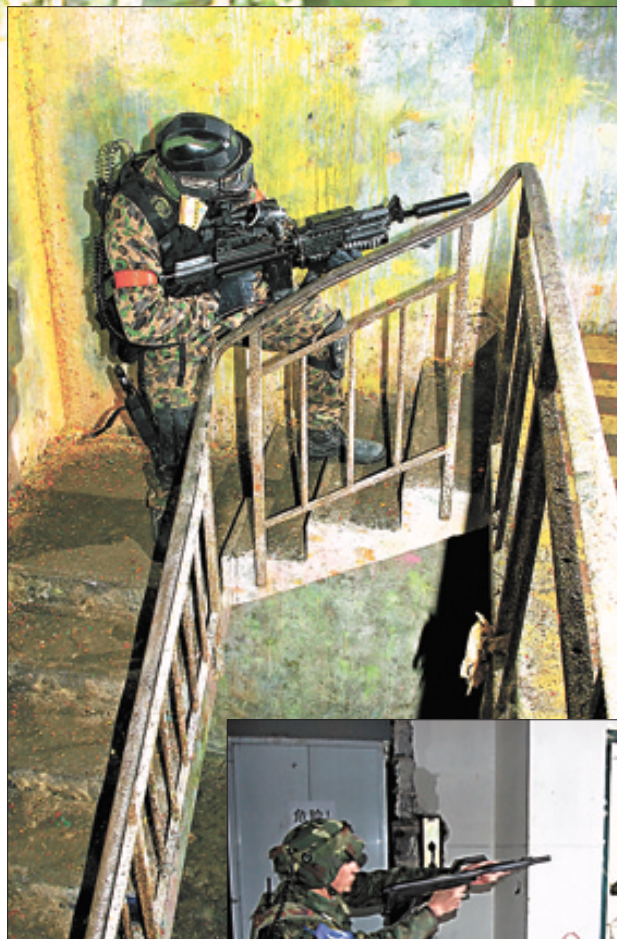
Inside houses or buildings, all you have to protect yourself are walls or pillars, so you need to be careful of corners where an enemy may be hiding. Also be aware of each sound you hear.

### Where:

There are abandoned building sites and houses along Jingshen Expressway or Badaling Expressway, a popular area for real estate projects. Some companies or individuals, however, have abandoned construction projects because of legal or financial problems. Drive along the expressways to scout for suitable locations.

### Equipment:

If you organize your own games, be sure to have the proper equipment. Camouflage uniforms, laser or paintball guns, helmets, goggles, kneepads and elbow guards are necessary. Sometimes, a mask is needed to protect your face.



In-door battle is exciting as well.



CFP Photos



**Movie of the week**

Keira Knightley, Matthew Rhys, Sienna Miller and Cillian Murphy star in this British movie based loosely on Welsh poet Dylan Thomas's love triangle. It was pitched as the next *Atonement*, with its dramatic and poetic wartime romance. The acting is fine, but the story is a hollow film wrapped in a pretty package.

It needed a more developed story, but that does not make it bad. It bears many similarities to the poem, which conjures up a world of passion and complexity.

**Synopsis**

During World War II, Vera Phillips meets her first love, charismatic Welsh poet Dylan Thomas, and their feelings for each other are renewed. Dylan is married to the spirited Caitlin MacNamara. The two women become friends despite their rivalry and the trio have happy times together until Vera marries soldier William Killick, making Dylan jealous. William is deployed abroad and a story of love and betrayal begins in the Welsh countryside.



# The Edge of Love (2008)

**Scene 1:**

(After a show in the bomb shelter, Vera Phillips comes across her first love Dylan Thomas in a pub. The poet is stunned by her beauty, and memories flood back.)

**Vera Phillips (V):** You might at least have lifted my veil! Oh, my God. Still love me?

**Dylan Thomas (D):** Did I ever? Lift the bloody (1), veil, Vera. Look at you, look at you. Not been called up (2)?

**V:** Just because I haven't got a uniform. It's me that puts the heart in the nation. Ammo factories, I sign in. Down the tubes (3), right now.

**D:** I always loved your voice, always. Amongst other things, I loved ...

**V:** Don't you come it, Dylan Thomas!

**D:** You haven't changed.

**V:** Course I have, thank God.

**D:** You can't. And don't. Not ever. If you do, I won't let you.

**Scene 2:**

(Dylan Thomas is reading his lines while his wife is lying in the bed.)

**D:** A stranger has come. To share my room in the house. Not right in the head. A girl mad as birds. She has come possessed. Who admits the delusive (4), light through the bouncing wall. Possessed by the skies. And taken by light in her arms at long and dear last. I may, without fail. Suffer the first vision that set fire to the stars.

**Caitlin MacNamara (C):** I don't like it, Dylan.

**Scene 3:**

(Dylan takes with Vera after he quarrelled with Caitlin. A sense of betrayal emerges.)

**V:** Why do you do it?

**D:** I don't do anything.

**D:** I do it, sleep with other women ... because I'm a poet, and a poet feeds off (5), life ... What?

**V:** Pompous sod (6), aren't you?

**D:** I do it because she does it. She always has. She can't help herself.

**V:** It doesn't mean anything to her.

**D:** You don't need William. You've got me. Nothing but you and me with time on our hands and each other to spend it with.

**Scene 4:**

(William is back from the battle field. The rumor about Vera and Dylan catches his ears, and he looks for the poet, drunkenly.)

**William Killick (W):** I'm looking for Dylan Thomas.

**Pub owner (P):** On the house (7), Captain Killick.

**W:** Ah, yes, the returning hero.

**P:** There'll be another when you've finished. The least we can do (8).

**W:** Where is he?

**P:** There it is. Waiting for you, see?

**Old Woman (O):** It's the spectre of communism. That's what frightens them, the Allies.

**D:** Two pints of bitter and a gin and tonic. Make mine brains.

**P:** Greece. Now, Greece. It's the communist partisans that risk their lives. To fight the Germans, not the British Tommy (9). What they're aiming for, secretly, the Allies, is for the Germans to wipe out the partisans, wipe out the communists, so they won't have to deal with them after the war.

**W:** You listen to me. I held a boy while my sergeant hacked his arm off. Later I held him while he died. British boy, he was. That was in Greece.

**O:** I beg your pardon?

**W:** We fight! Out there. So you and your friends can sit around in Hampstead and theorize. You do that while we bleed our lives away. What do you know about war? You people, what do you know about war, hmm?

**D:** Drink up, boys and girls, drink up.

**Scene 5:**

(Dylan and Caitlin will move to another place and the women say their good-byes.)

**C:** There's that smile.

**V:** I never meant to hurt you.

**C:** Might as well, I suppose. Smile, I mean.

**V:** Write, Catty.

**C:** I'll leave that to Dylan.

**V:** Write to me.

**C:** Don't be lonely.

**V:** Don't you, Catty. Don't you.

**Dylan Thomas' lines:** Not for the proud man apart from the raging moon I write on these spindrift (10) pages. Nor for the towering dead with their nightingales and psalms (11). But for the lovers, their arms round the griefs of the ages.

**Vocabulary**

**1 bloody:** a coarse word widely used in British English to convey the speakers emotion.

**2 call up:** here it means an order to report for military service.

**3 tube:** what Londoners call their "subway"

**4 delusive:** having the nature of a delusion, falsehood

**5 feed off:** live or subsist on

**6 Pompous sod:** a person who is self-important

**7 On the house:** free of charge, paid for by the establishment

**8 The least we can do:** "At least we can do this in return"

**9 British Tommy:** British soldier

**10 spindrift:** spray blown up from the surface of the sea, the word is used to describe the flipping of pages

**11 psalms:** a book of the Hebrew Bible with religious verse

(By Wang Yu)



**Chinglish story**

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Gan Tian at [gantian@ynet.com](mailto:gantian@ynet.com).

# A beautiful, elegant “cash cow”

By Jin Zhu

In my senior year in college, I got a chance to visit one of Tianjin's largest automobile showrooms. The day I visited was also the opening day of a royal automobile exhibition and hundred of cars from local and international manufacturers were displayed to the public.

But something else turned out to be on exhibit – female models standing beside the cars. At that time, the public had not yet become familiar with “car models,” so visitors gawked at the beautiful, elegant women. And among those models I saw a familiar face, a college classmate named Nancy. Dressed fashionably and fully made up, she looked different from the university student I knew.

“It's a well-paying job,” she told me when I spoke to her during a break. “Just by working five hours a day, I can earn even more than what my father makes in a month.” The money she makes as a model pays not only for her daily living expenses, but also allows her to help out her family, she said. Since then, I admired beautiful, independent and responsible women like her.

Years later, when I was already working in Beijing, I bumped into Nancy at a big party. She looked beautiful and elegant and I could see that many men were drawn to her, just like those visitors at the Tianjin car show.

“Look at that girl. She's so beautiful,” Eric, one of my colleagues who was also at the party, said.

I told him that Nancy worked as a car model many years ago to earn extra money. “When most of us had to depend on our parents in college, Nancy was earning her own money. As far as I know, she has already gone on to become a famous model. No doubt, she is a golden tree for her family.”

“What do you mean by ‘golden tree’?” Eric said.

“I mean, she earns money that helps her family too,” I explained.

“I get it. You mean ‘cash cow.’ That's the phrase we use in English to refer to a person who is a dependable and steady source of funds or income,” Eric said. “In the corporate context, we use ‘cash cow’ to refer to a department which makes the company a lot of money.”

If that is the case, then Nancy is the loveliest “cash cow” I have ever seen.



CFP Photo

**Blacklist**

Beijing Today has come up with Blacklist, a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then this page is your new best friend. Watch out for it each week.

## Local professor: Zhu Shida

### 1. The Olympic is not their only destination.

People have been confused with the use of “Olympic,” “Olympics” and “Olympic Games.” “Olympic,” as in the sentence above, is an adjective. You may say Olympic torch or Olympic field. When you refer to the games, use “Olympics,” which is a noun. The sentence may be corrected to say: The Olympics is not their only destination.

There is an interesting linguistic phenomenon to “Olympic Games” because it may take either the third person singular or plural form. You may say: The Sydney Olympic Games was a spectacular event people will never forget or The Beijing Olympic Games was a great success. Both are right.

### 2. The places that worth seeing

The problem with this sentence is that the attributive phrase is not complete. Please remember that when “worth” means the adjective “good or important enough for” or “deserving,” the set phrase is always “to be worth” followed by a gerund. The “verb to be” can never be omitted. So, the right way to say it is: The places that are worth seeing.

The word “worth” can only be a predicate and can never be an attributive, as opposed to “worthy.” You may say “a worthy cause” or “the worthy recipients.”

## Native Speaker: Penny Turner

### 1. The Olympic is not their only destination.

I agree with Professor Zhu's diagnosis and suggested remedy for this sentence. Just to note that to avoid being redundant, some people say “The Games” when they refer to the Olympics. The words are capitalized because in this context, you are referring to the Olympic Games.

This is similar to the trouble people encounter with “Oscar,” “Oscars” and “Oscar Awards.” All are nouns, but the first one refers to the trophy, while the second and third refer to the event. So you would say: “Daniel Day-Lewis won the best actor Oscar this year” and “I always watch the Oscars (or the Oscar Awards) every year.”

### 2. The places that worth seeing

I think Professor Zhu has covered all the salient points in this case, and I will leave it at that.

**Chinglish on the way**

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please take a picture and send it to [gantian@ynet.com](mailto:gantian@ynet.com) together with your name and address.



## Carefully fall to the river

By Tiffany Tan

If it were a scorchingly hot summer day, this would make a terrific suggestion. Imagine a park giving visitors permission to take a dip in its river – but of course we are reminded to enter the water

“carefully” so people do not hurt themselves. “Carefully” probably also means to enter the river quietly so we do not startle the animals living around it.

What the Chinese sign tells us, however, is to “be careful of falling into

the river.” Yes, the original idea was too good to be true. But I wonder if any foreigners have actually made the mistake of following the sign's suggestion. Park officials cannot blame visitors for obeying the rules, can they?



# Get ready for a Grand Christmas

## Grand Millennium Beijing

White Christmas Eve buffet at 888 yuan net per person on December 24, inclusive of free flow of house wine, local beer, juice and soft drinks. Christmas day brunch at 488 yuan net per person on December 25, inclusive of free flow of champagne, house wine, freshly made mojitos, local beer, juice and soft drinks.

Where: CBD International Restaurant, Grand Millennium Hotel, 7 Dong Sanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District  
Tel: 6530 9383

## Christmas Gala dinner

Lose yourself in a sumptuous Christmas gala dinner at Crowne Plaza Hotel. Besides free beverage, the dinner buffet includes great entertainment shows and lucky draws with 100 prizes.

Where: Crowne Plaza Beijing, 48 Wangfujing Dajie, Dongcheng District  
Cost: 688 – 1688 yuan  
Tel: 5911 9910 or 5911 9488

## Christmas Eve

Grand Hyatt Beijing has prepared various festival dinners to celebrate this sparkling Christmas. The deluxe buffet with live entertainment and a lucky draw in the Grand Ballroom is priced at 2,288 yuan. Five-course set dinner at Da Giorgio is priced 1,488 yuan, including one glass of Moët & Chandon champagne. Grand celebration is in the Grand Cafe at 988 yuan, including unlimited beverages and imported wines. Set dinner at Redmoon is for 988 yuan, including a baby bottle of Moët & Chandon. Cantonese set dinner at Noble Court and Chinese chic at Made in China are both for 988 yuan. All prices are subject to 15 percent surcharge.

Where: Grand Hyatt Beijing, 1 Dong



Chang'an Jie, Dongcheng District  
Tel: 8518 1234 ext 3628

## Christmas with the Stars

A dazzling Christmas Eve celebration with dinner and show, highlighted by exciting performances from Hong Kong and Taiwan's most dazzling stars, Julie Su, Wing Yip (of the famous pop group Beyond), Yedda Zhao and Zidan Mai.

Where: Conference Hall, China World Hotel, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: December 24, 6 – 10:30 pm  
Cost: 3,588 yuan for regular, 4,500 yuan for deluxe, 5,388 yuan for premier  
Tel: 6505 5838

## The Regent Beijing

Enjoy the Christmas Eve buffet with live

trio jazz entertainment and a lucky draw at Cafe 99 for 788 yuan (398 yuan child only). Start the evening with a glass of Prosecco and pay 888 yuan for a five-course Italian dinner at Daccapo. Immerse yourself in a seven-course candlelit dinner at the Bar & Grill for 1,128 yuan, inclusive of a welcome glass of Bollinger. The specialties from all the Alpines countries are priced at 175 yuan at Crescent Lounge. All prices are subject to 15 percent surcharge.

Where: The Regent Beijing, 99 Jinbao Jie, Dongcheng District  
Tel: 8522 1789

## Haute Gourmandize

A sumptuous Christmas Eve dinner awaits you at Sofitel Wanda, with a six-course menu and welcome glass of champagne. The renowned chef Frederic Meynard will serve this feast with his creative French gourmet cuisine.

Where: Sofitel Wanda Beijing, Tower C, Wanda Plaza, 93 Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District  
When: December 24  
Cost: 1888 yuan  
Tel: 8599 6666 ext 6528

## Authentic Cantonese

### Christmas dinner

Shangri-La Hotel Beijing offers authentic Cantonese buffet dinner, inclusive of fabulous lucky draw prizes, house wines, selected beers and unlimited soft drinks. Hong Kong Chef Chau Qi Fong and his creative and talented staff provide only the very best authentic Cantonese cuisine for diners.

Where: Shang Palace, Shangri-La Hotel Beijing, 29 Zizhuyuan Lu, Haidian District  
When: December 24  
Cost: 1,288 yuan  
Tel: 8882 6715

(By Sun Feng)

## Hotel



## Paradise Gloria Grand Hotel opens in Beijing

Paradise Gloria Grand Hotel Beijing, located in Shijingshan District, is now open. The 309-room hotel provides a perfect getaway for business and leisure travelers. It has non-smoking floors and E-Floors, as well as Chinese and western-style restaurants. The ballroom, function and meeting rooms are ideal for conferences, and banquet arrangements can be made to cater to up to 300 people. The hotel has a natural seawater swimming pool and comprehensive spa facilities.

Where: Paradise Gloria Grand Hotel Beijing, 32 Shijingshan Lu, Shijingshan District  
Tel: 6887 6688

## Corporate year-end parties

The Radisson SAS Hotel is offering a corporate year-end party package. It includes a Chinese set menu or Western buffet menu, or a mixed menu of your selection, two hours of free-flowing soft drinks and beer, an audio-visual system and Karaoke.

Where: Radisson SAS Hotel Beijing, 6A Bei Sanhuan Dong Lu,

Chaoyang District  
When: December 1 – January 24, 2009  
Cost: 199 yuan (per person)  
Tel: 5922 3231

## Suite experience

The St. Regis Beijing offers a Suite Experience package for guests staying at least two nights. It includes a daily breakfast, 24-hour butler service, courtesy pressing service of up to five pieces of clothing upon arrival, free access to the Skyline Court, a one-way airport to hotel limousine transfer service and daily in-room Internet access. In-room check-in is available for ambassador suite bookings.

Where: The St. Regis Beijing, 21 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: before February 15, 2009  
Cost: from 2,380 yuan (subject to a 15 percent service charge)  
Tel: 6460 6688 ext 2321

## Love Your Suite package

The Love Your Suite package includes a one-night stay in a Premier suite, four hours' use of a limousine within the downtown area, complimentary access to the Horizon Club Lounge, complimentary use of the Internet, a complimentary buffet dinner for two persons at Yi Cafe. It also includes one Chi Balance treatment at CHI, The Spa at Shangri-La and a welcome gift.

Where: Pudong Shangri-La Shanghai, 33 Fucheng Lu, Pudong, Shanghai  
When: before February 28, 2009  
Cost: from 5,888 yuan  
Tel: 021 6882 8888

## Ceremony



## Teddy Bear Fantasia

With Christmas approaching, Sofitel Wanda Beijing is presenting its Teddy Bear Tree lighting ceremony. Wrap yourself in Christmas magic with an enchanting children's choir and the "Vous" Lobby lounge band. Enjoy the season's festive special drinks and holiday cookies.

Where: Sofitel Wanda Beijing, Tower C, Wanda Plaza, 93 Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District  
When: December 5, 7:30 – 8:30 pm  
Tel: 8599 6666

## Christmas Tree Lighting

Everyone is invited to the Kempinski Hotel's Christmas tree lighting ceremony. Christmas cookies and mulled wine will be served at the event.

Where: Kempinski Hotel Beijing Lufthansa Center, 50 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District  
When: November 30, 6-6:30 pm  
Tel: 6465 3388 ext 4145

## Marriott Majestic Night

Provincia Restaurant is holding Marriott Majestic Night, a cocktail party. The casual and relaxed atmosphere attracts many ambassadors and chamber guests. Its bottle show has inspired many guests to photograph the performance. A lucky draw is one of the other highlights of the night.

Where: Provincia Restaurant, Beijing Marriott Hotel City Wall, 7 Jianguomen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District  
Tel: 5811 8888

## Aviation

## SriLankan Airlines adds route to Rome

SriLankan Airlines will open a new route from Colombo to Rome starting December 3 with three flights each week. Rome is the fourth of SriLankan Airlines' European destinations: Frankfurt, Paris and London.

The newly added route allows passengers to take off from Beijing or Hong Kong and transfer at Colombo. If the layover is longer than eight hours, SriLankan Airlines will provide passengers with free accommodations in star-rated hotels, meals and airport transportation service.

(By Sun Feng)